558

TALES

OF

FASHIONABLE LIFE.

VOL. II.

Printed by S. Hamilton, Weybridge.

Serfojee Rajah, 1
558
1118

TALES

OF

FASHIONABLE LIFE,

BY

MISS EDGEWORTH,

AUTHOR OF PRACTICAL EDUCATION, BELINDA, CASTLE RACKRENT, ESSAY ON IRISH BULLS, &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

CONTAINING

ALMERIA, MADAME DE FLEURY, AND THE DUN.

Tutta la gente in lieta fronte udiva
Le graziose e finte istorielle
Ed i difetti altrui tosto scopriva
Ciascuno, e non i proprj espressi in quelle;
O se de proprj sospettava, ignoti
Credeali a ciascun altro, e a se nol noti.

THE SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON,
ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD.
1809.

ALMERIA.

JOHN HODGKINSON was an eminent and wealthy Yorkshire grazier, who had no children of his own, but who had brought up in his family Almeria Turnbull, the daughter of his wife by a former husband, a Mr. Turnbull. Mr. Turnbull had also been a grazier, but had not been successful in the management of his affairs, therefore he could not leave his daughter any fortune; and at the death of her mother she became entirely dependent on her father-in-law. Old Hodgkinson was a whimsical man, who, except in eating and drinking, had no inclination to spend any part of the fortune he had made; but enjoying the consequence

which money confers, endeavoured to increase this importance by keeping all his acquaintance in uncertainty, as to what he called his "*testamentary dispositions.*" Sometimes he hinted, that his step-daughter should be a match for the proudest riband in England; sometimes he declared, that he did not know of what use money could be to a woman, except to make her a prey to a fortune-hunter, and that his girl should not be left in a way to be duped.

As to his daughter's education, that was an affair in which he did not interfere; all that he wished was, that the girl should be kept humble, and have no fine notions put into her head, nor any communication with fine people. He kept company only with men of his own sort; and as he had no taste for any kind of literature, Almeria's time would have hung rather heavy upon her hands, had she been totally confined to his society; but, fortunately for her, there lived in the neighbourhood an elderly gentleman and

his daughter, whom her father allowed her to visit. Mr. Elmour was a country gentleman of a moderate fortune, a respectable family, and of a most amiable character: between his daughter Ellen aud Miss Turnbull there had subsisted an intimacy from their earliest childhood. The professions of this friendship had hitherto been much the warmest on the part of Almeria; the proofs were, perhaps, the strongest on the side of Ellen. Miss Elmour, as the daughter of a gentleman, whose family had been long settled in the country, was rather *more considered* than Miss Turnbull, who was the daughter of a grazier, whose money had but lately raised him to the level of gentility. At Mr. Elmour's house Almeria had an opportunity of being in much better company than she could ever have seen at her father's; better company in every respect, but chiefly in the popular, or more properly in the aristocratic, sense of the term: her visits had consequently been long and frequent; she appeared

to have a peculiar taste for refinement in manners and conversation, and often deplored the want she felt of these at home. She expressed a strong desire to acquire information, and to improve herself in every elegant accomplishment; and Ellen, who was of a character far superior to the little meanness of female competition and jealousy, shared with her friend all the advantages of her situation. Old Hodgkinson never had any books in his house, but such as Almeria borrowed from Mr. Elmour's library. Ellen constantly sent Miss Turnbull all the new publications which her father got from town—she copied for her friend the new music with which she was supplied, showed her every new drawing or print, gave her the advantage of the lessons she received from an excellent drawing master, and let her into those little mysteries of art which masters sometimes sell so dear.

This was done with perfect readiness and simplicity: Ellen never seemed con-

scious that she was bestowing a favour; but appeared to consider what she did as matters of course, or as the necessary consequences of friendship. She treated her friend at all times, and in all companies, with that uniform attention and equality of manner, which most people profess, and which so few have strength of mind to practise. Almeria expressed, and probably at this time felt, unbounded gratitude and affection for Ellen; indeed her expressions were sometimes so vehement, that Miss Elmour rallied her for being romantic. Almeria one day declared, that she should wish to pass all the days of her life at Elmour-grove, without seeing any other human creatures but her friend and her friend's father.

"Your imagination deceives you, my dear Almeria," said Ellen, smiling.—"It is my heart, not my imagination, that speaks," said Almeria, laying her hand upon her heart, or upon the place where she fancied her heart ought to be.

"Your understanding will, perhaps, speak a different language by and by, and your heart will not be the worse for it, my good young lady," said old Mr. Elmour.

Almeria persisted even to tears; and it was not till young Mr. Elmour came home, and till she had spent a few weeks in his company, that she began to admit that three was the number sacred to friendship. Frederick Elmour was a man of honour, talents, spirit, and of a decided character: he was extremely fond of his sister, and was prepossessed in favour of every thing and person that she loved. Her intimate friend was consequently interesting to him; and it must be supposed, that Miss Elmour's praises of Almeria were managed more judiciously than eulogiums usually are, by the effect which they produced. Frederick became attached to Miss Turnbull, though he perceived that, in firmness and dignity of character, she was not equal to his sister. This inferiority did not injure her in his

opinion, because it was always acknowledged with so much candour and humility by Almeria, who seemed to look up to her friend as to a being of a superior order. This freedom from envy, and this generous enthusiasm, first touched young Mr. Elmour's heart. Next to possessing his sister's virtues and talents, loving them was, in his opinion, the greatest merit. He thought, that a person capable of appreciating and admiring Ellen's character must be desirous of imitating her; and the similarity of their tastes, opinions, and principles, seemed to him the most secure pledge for his future happiness. Miss Turnbull's fortune, whatever it might be, was an object of no great importance to him; his father, though not opulent, was in easy circumstances, and was "willing," he said, "to deprive himself of some luxuries for the sake of his son, whom he would not control in the choice of a wife—a choice on which he knew, from his own experience, that the happiness of life so much depends."

The benevolent old gentleman had peculiar merit in this conduct, because, if he had a weakness in the world, it was a prejudice in favour of what is called *good family and birth:* it had long been the secret wish of his heart, that his only son might marry into a family as ancient as his own. Frederick was fully sensible of the sacrifice that his father made of his pride: but that which he was willing to make of what he called his luxuries, his son's affection and sense of justice forbade him to accept. He could not rob his father of any of the comforts of his declining years, whilst in the full vigour of youth it was in his power, by his own exertions, to obtain an independent maintenance. He had been bred to the bar; no expense had been spared by his father in his education, no efforts had been omitted by himself. He was now ready to enter on the duties of his profession with ardour, but without presumption.

Our heroine must be pardoned by the most prudent, and admired by the most

romantic, for being desperately in love with a youth of such a character, and such expectations. Whilst the young lady's passion was growing every hour more lively, her old father was growing every hour more lethargic. He had a superstitious dread of making a will, as if it were a preparation for death which would hasten the fatal moment. Hodgkinson's friends tried to conquer this prejudice, but it was in vain to reason with a man, who had never reasoned during the whole of his life about any thing except bullocks. Old Hodgkinson died—that was a matter of no great consequence to any body—but he died without a will, and that was a matter of some importance to his daughter. After searching in every probable and improbable place, there was, at length, found in his own handwriting a memorandum, the beginning of which was in the first leaf of his cookery-book, and the end in the last leaf of his prayer-book. There was some difficulty in deciphering the memoran-

dum, for it was cross-barred with miscellaneous observations in inks of various colours—red, blue, and green. As it is dangerous to garble law papers, we shall lay the document before the public just as it appeared.

Copy from first leaf of the Cookery Book.

I John Hodgkinson of Vetch-field, East Riding of Yorkshire, Grazier and so forth, not choosing to style myself Gentleman, though entitled so to do, do hereby certify, that when I can find an honest attorney *it is my* intention to make my will and to leave—

[*Here the testator's memorandum was interrupted by a receipt in a diminutive female hand, seemingly written some years before.*]

Mrs. Turnbull's recipe, infallible for all aches, bruises, and strains.

Take a handful of these herbs following—Wormwood, Sage, Broom-flowers, Clown's-All-heal, Chickweed, Cumphry, Birch, Groundsell, Agremony, Southernwood, Ribwort, Mary Gould leaves, Bramble, Rosemary, Rue, Elder-tops,

Camomile, Aly Compaine-root, half a handful of Red Earthworms, two ounces of Cummins-seeds, Deasy-roots, Columbine, Sweet Margarum, Dandylion, Devil's bit, six pound of May butter, two pound of Sheep suet, half a pound of Dear suet, a quart of salet oil beat well in y[e] boiling till the oil be green—Then strain—It will be better if you add a dozen of Swallows, and pound all their Feathers, Gizzards, and Heads before boiling—It will cure all aches.—*

[*Beneath this valuable recipe Mr. Hodgkinson's testamentary dispositions continue as follows.*]

All I am worth in the world real or personable—

To Collar a Pig.

Take a young fat pig, and when he is well scalded cut off his head, then slit him down the back, take out his bones, lay him in a dish of milk and water, and shift him twice a day—for the rest, turn to page 103.

* Literally copied from a family receipt book in the author's possession.

To my step-daughter Almeria, who is now at Elmour Grove in her eighteenth year—

[Written across the above in red ink.]

Mem^{m}—I prophecy this third day of August, that the man from Hull will be here to morrow with *fresh* mullets.

And as girls go, I believe a good girl, considering the times—but if she disoblige me by marriage, or otherwise, I hereby revoke the same.

[Written diagonally in red ink.]

Mem^{m}—Weight of the Big Bullock, 90 score, besides offal.

[The value was so pale it could not be deciphered.]

And I further intend to except out of my above bequest to my daughter Almeria, the sum of

A fine meathod to make Punch of Valentia dram. v. page 7.

Ten thousand pounds, now in Sir Thomas Stock's my banker's hands, as a token of remembrance to John Hodgkinson of

Hull on account of his being my namesake, and, I believe, relation—

[*Continuation in the last leaf of the prayer-book.*]

It is my further intention (whenever I find said honest attorney fit for my will) to leave sundry mourning rings with my hair value *(blank)*—one in particular to Charles Elmour, Sen. Esquire, and also—

[*Upside down, in red ink.*]

Mem^m^—Yorkshire Puddings—Knox says good in my case.

Hodgkinson late
Hannah ^ Turnbull (my wife)
her prayer book,
born Decem^r^ 5th, 1700,
died Jany 4th, 1760;
leaving only behind her, in this world,
Almeria Turnbull (my step-daughter)

Also another mourning ring to Frederick, the son of Charles Elmour, Esq. and ditto to Ellen his daughter, if I have hair enough under my wig.

[*Diagonal in red ink.*]

Mem^{m}—To know from Dr. Knox by return of post what is good against sleep —in my case—

This is the short of my Will—the attorney (when found) will make it long enough.—And I hereby declare, that I will write no other Will with my own hand, for man, woman, or child—And that I will and do hereby disinherit any person or persons—male or female—good —bad—or indifferent—who shall take upon them to advise or speak to me about making or writing my Will—which is no business of theirs—This my last resolution and memorandum, dated, this 5th of August—reap to-morrow, (glass rising)—1766, and signed with my own hand, same time.

John Hodgkinson, grazier & so forth.

Now it happened, that Mr. Hodgkinson's namesake and relation disdained the ten thousand pounds legacy, and claimed

the whole property as heir at law. Almeria, who was utterly unacquainted with business, applied to Mr. Elmour in this difficulty, and he had the goodness to undertake the management of her affairs. Frederick engaged to carry on her lawsuit, and to plead her cause against this rapacious Mr. Hodgkinson, of Hull.—Whilst the suit was pending, Miss Turnbull had an opportunity of seeing something of the ways of the world, for the manners of her Yorkshire acquaintance, of all but Ellen and the Elmours, varied towards her, according to the opinion formed of the probable event of the trial on which her fortune depended. She felt these variations most keenly. In particular, she was provoked by the conduct of Lady Stock, who was at this time *the* fashionable lady of York: Sir Thomas, her husband, was a great banker; and whenever she condescended to visit her friends in the country, she shone upon them in all the splendour and pride of wealth. Miss Turnbull, immediately af-

ter her father's death, went, accompanied by old Mr. Elmour, to Sir Thomas Stock, to settle accounts with him; she was received by his lady as a great heiress, with infinite civility; her visit punctually returned, and an invitation to dinner sent to her and the Elmours with all due expedition. As she seemed to wish to accept of it, her friends agreed to accompany her, though in general they disliked fine dinners; and though they seldom left their retirement to mix in the gaieties of York. Miss Turnbull was received in rather a different manner from what she expected upon this occasion; for between the sending and the accepting of the invitation, Lady Stock had heard, that her title to the fortune was disputed, and that many were of an opinion, that instead of having two hundred thousand pounds, she would not have a shilling. Almeria was scarcely noticed, upon her entrance, by the lady of the house; she found herself in a formidable circle, where every body seemed to consider her as be-

ing out of her place. At dinner she was suffered to go to a side table. From the moment she entered the house till she left it, Lady Stock never deigned to speak to her, nor for one instant to recollect that such a person existed. Not even Madame Roland, when she was sent to the second table at the fermier general's, expressed more indignation than Almeria did, at the insolence of this banker's lady. She could think and speak of nothing else, all the time she was going home in the evening to Elmour Grove. Ellen, who had more philosophy than our heroine, did not sympathize in the violence of her indignation; on the contrary, she was surprised that Almeria could feel so much hurt by the slights of a woman, for whom she had neither esteem nor affection, and with whom she was indeed scarcely acquainted.

"But does not her conduct excite your indignation?" said Miss Turnbull.

"No: it rather deserves my contempt. If a friend—if you, for instance, had

treated me in such a manner, it would have provoked my anger, I dare say."

"I! O how impossible!" cried Almeria—"Such insufferable pride! Such downright rudeness!—She was tolerably civil to you, but me she never noticed; and this sudden change, it seems, Frederick, arises from her doubts of my fortune.—Is not such meanness really astonishing?"

"It would be astonishing, perhaps," replied Frederick, "if we did not see similar instances every day.—Lady Stock, you know, is nothing but a mere woman of the world."

"I hate mere women of the world," cried Almeria.

Ellen observed, that it was not worth while to hate, it was sufficient to avoid them.—Almeria grew warmer in her abhorrence, and Ellen at last expressed, half in jest, half in earnest, some fear that, if Miss Turnbull felt with such exquisite sensibility the neglect of persons of fashion, she might in a different situation

be ambitious, or vain of their favour. Almeria was offended, and was very near quarrelling with her friend for harbouring such a mean opinion of her character.

"Do you imagine, that *I could* ever make a friend of such a person as Lady Stock?"

"A friend! far from it! I am very sure that you could not."

"Then how could I be ambitious of her favour? I am desirous only of the favour, esteem, and affection of my friends."

"But people who live in what is called the world, you know, my dear Almeria, desire to have acquaintance as well as friends," said Ellen; "and they value those by their fashion or rank, and by the honour which may be received from their notice in public places."

"Yes, my dear," interrupted Almeria, "though I have never been in London as you have, I understand all that perfectly well, I assure you; but I only say, that I am certain I should never judge,

and that I should never act, in such a manner."

Ellen smiled, and said, "It is difficult to be certain of what we should do in situations in which we have never been placed."—Almeria burst into tears, and her friend could scarcely pacify her by the kindest expressions.

"Observe, my dear Almeria, that I said *we*, not *you*: I do not pretend that, till I have been tried, I could be certain of my own strength of mind in new situations: I believe it is from weakness that people are often so desirous of the notice of persons for whom they have no esteem. If I were forced to live among a certain set of company, I suppose I should, in time, do just as they do; for I confess, that I do not think I could bear every day to be utterly neglected in society, even in such as we have been in to-day."

Almeria wondered to hear her friend speak with so little confidence of her own spirit and independence; and vehemently declared, "that she was certain

no change of external circumstances could make any alteration in her sentiments and feelings." Ellen forbore to press the subject farther, although the proofs, which Almeria had this day given of her stoicism, were not absolutely conclusive.

About a month after this conversation had passed, the suit against Miss Turnbull, to set aside Mr. Hodgkinson's will, was tried at York. The court was crowded at an early hour; for much entertainment was expected, from the oddity of old Hodgkinson's *testamentary dispositions*: besides, the large amount of the property at stake could not fail to make the cause interesting—several ladies appeared in the galleries; among the rest, Lady Stock—Miss Elmour was there also, to accompany Almeria—Frederick was one of her counsel; and when it came to his turn to speak, he pleaded her cause with so much eloquence and ability, as to obtain universal approbation. After a trial, which lasted many hours,

a verdict was given in Miss Turnbull's favour. An immediate change appeared in the manners of all her acquaintance—they crowded round her with smiles and congratulations; and persons with whom she was scarcely acquainted, or who had, till now, hardly deigned to acknowledge her acquaintance, accosted her with an air of intimacy. Lady Stock, in particular, recovered, upon this occasion, both her sight and speech: she took Almeria's hand most graciously, and went on chattering with the greatest volubility, as they stood at the door of the court-house. Her ladyship's handsome equipage had drawn up, and she offered to carry Miss Turnbull home: Almeria excused herself, but felt ashamed, when she saw the look of contempt which her ladyship bestowed on Mr. Elmour's old coach, which was far behind a number of others, and which could but ill bear a comparison with a new London carriage. Angry with herself for this weakness, our heroine endeavoured to conceal it even from

her own mind; and feelings of gratitude to her friends revived in her heart the moment she was out of the sight of her fine acquaintance. She treated Ellen with even more than usual fondness; and her acknowledgements of obligation to her counsel and his father were expressed in the strongest terms. In a few days, there came a pressing invitation from Lady Stock; Mr. Elmour had accounts of Miss Turnbull's to settle with Sir Thomas Stock, and, notwithstanding the air of indifference with which she read the cards, Almeria was not sorry to accept of the invitation, as she knew that she should be received in a very different manner from that in which she had been treated on her former visit. She laughed, and said, "that she should be entertained by observing the change, which a few thousand pounds more or less could produce in Lady Stock's behaviour." Yet, such is the inconsistency or the weakness of human wishes, the very attentions

which our heroine knew were paid merely to her fortune, and not to her merit, flattered her vanity; and she observed, with a strange mixture of pain and pleasure, that there was a marked difference in Lady Stock's manner towards her and *the Elmours*. When the evening was over, and when she "had leisure to be good," Almeria called herself severely to account for this secret satisfaction, of which she had been conscious from the preference given her over her friends—she accused herself of ingratitude, and endeavoured to recover her own self-complacency by redoubled professions of esteem and affection for those, to whom she had so much reason to be attached. But fresh invitations came from Lady Stock, and the course of her thoughts again changed. Ellen declined accompanying her, and Miss Turnbull regretted this exceedingly, "because it would be so distressing and awkward for her to go *alone*."

"Then why do you go at all, my

dear?" said Ellen; "you speak as if there were some moral necessity for your visit."

"Moral necessity! O no," said Almeria, laughing; "but I really think there is a *polite* necessity, if you will allow me the expression. Would it not be rude for all of us to refuse, when Lady Stock has made this music party, as she says, entirely on my account—on our account I mean? for you see she mentions your fondness for music; and if she had not written so remarkably civilly to you, I assure you, I would neither go myself, nor think of pressing you to go."

This oratory had no effect upon Ellen; our heroine went alone to the music meeting. The old coach returned to Elmour Grove at night, empty—the servant brought "Lady Stock's compliments, and she would send her carriage home with Miss Turnbull, early the next morning."—After waiting above an hour and a half beyond their usual time, the family were sitting down to dinner the next day, when

Miss Turnbull, in Lady Stock's fine carriage, drove up the avenue—Frederick handed her out of the carriage with more ceremony and less affection than he had ever shown before. Old Mr. Elmour's manner was also more distant, and Ellen's colder. Almeria attempted to apologize, but could not get through her speech—she then tried to laugh at her own awkwardness—but her laugh not being seconded, she sat down to dinner in silence, colouring prodigiously, and totally abashed. Good old Mr. Elmour was the first to relent, and to endeavour, by resuming his usual kind familiarity, to relieve her painful confusion. Ellen's coolness was also dissipated when Miss Turnbull took her aside after dinner, and with tears in her eyes declared, " she was sorry she had not had sufficient strength of mind to resist Lady Stock's importunities to stay all night;—that as to the carriage, it was sent back without her knowledge; and that this morning, though she had three or four times expressed her

fears, that she should keep her friends at Elmour Grove waiting for dinner, yet Lady Stock would not understand her hints;" and she declared, "she got away the very instant her ladyship's carriage came to the door." By Ellen's kind interposition, Frederick, whose pride had been most ready to take the alarm at the least appearance of slight to his father and sister, was pacified—he laid aside his ceremony to *Miss Turnbull;* called her "Almeria," as he used to do—and all was well again. With difficulty, and blushes, Almeria came out with an after confession, that she had been so silly as to make half a promise to Lady Stock, of going to her ball, and of spending a few days with her at York, before she left the country.

"But this promise was only conditional," said she; "if you or your father would take it the least ill or unkindly of me, I assure you I will not go—I would rather offend all the Lady Stocks in the

world than you, my dearest Ellen, or your father, to whom I am so much obliged."

"Do not talk of obligations," interrupted Ellen; "amongst friends, there can be no obligations—I will answer for it, that my father will not be offended at your going to this ball; and I assure you, I shall not take it unkindly. If you would not think me very proud I should tell you, that I wish for our sakes, as well as your own, that you should see as much of this Lady Stock, and as many *Lady Stocks* as possible; for I am convinced that, upon *intimate* acquaintance, we must rise in your opinion."

Almeria protested, that she had never for an instant thought of comparing Ellen with Lady Stock. "A friend—a bosom friend with an acquaintance—an acquaintance of yesterday!—I never thought of making such a comparison."

—"That is the very thing of which I complain," said Ellen, smiling—"I beg you will make the comparison, my dear

Almeria, and the more opportunities you have of forming your judgement, the better."

Notwithstanding that there was something rather humiliating to Miss Turnbull in the dignified composure with which Ellen now, for the first time in her life, implied her own superiority; Almeria secretly rejoiced, that it was by her friend's own request, that the visits to her fine acquaintance were repeated. At Lady Stock's ball Miss Turnbull was much *distinguished*, as it is called—Sir Thomas's eldest son was her partner; and though he was not remarkably agreeable, yet his attentions were flattering to her vanity, because the rival belles of York vied for his homage. The delight of being taken notice of in public was new to Almeria, and it quite intoxicated her brain. Six hours sleep afterwards were not sufficient to sober her completely; as her friends at Elmour Grove perceived the next morning—she neither talked, looked, nor

moved like herself, though she was perfectly unconscious, that in this delirium of vanity and affectation she was an object of pity and disgust to the man she loved.

Ellen had sufficient good nature and candour to make allowance for foibles in others, from which her own character was totally free; she was clear sighted to the merits, but not blind to the faults of her friends, and she resolved to wait patiently till Almeria should return to herself. Miss Turnbull, in compliance with her friend's advice, took as many opportunities as possible of being with Lady Stock: her ladyship's company was by no means agreeable to Almeria's natural taste, for her ladyship had neither sense nor knowledge, and her conversation consisted merely of common-place phrases, or the second-hand affectation of fashionable nonsense; yet, though Miss Turnbull felt no actual pleasure in her company, she was vain of being of her parties, and even conde-

scended to repeat some of her sayings, in which there was neither sense nor wit. From having lived much in the London world, her ladyship was acquainted with a prodigious number of names of persons of consequence and quality; and by these our heroine's ears were charmed. Her ladyship's dress was also an object of admiration and imitation, and the York ladies begged patterns of every thing she wore. Almeria consequently thought, that no other clothes could be worn with propriety; and she was utterly ashamed of her past self for having lived so long in ignorance, and for having had so bad a taste, as ever to have thought Ellen Elmour a model for imitation.

"Miss Elmour," her ladyship said, "was a very sensible young woman, no doubt, but she could hardly be considered as a model of fashion."

A new standard for estimating merit was raised in Almeria's mind; and her friend, for an instant, sunk before the

vast advantage of having the most fashionable mantua-maker and milliner in town. Ashamed of this dereliction of principle, she, a few minutes afterwards, warmly pronounced a panegyric on Ellen, to which Lady Stock replied only with a vacant, supercilious countenance:

"May be so,—no doubt,—of course,—the Elmours are a very respectable family, I'm told—and really more genteel than the country families one sees: but is not it odd, they don't *mix more?* One seldom meets them in town any where, nor at any of the watering-places in summer."

To this charge, Almeria, with blushes, was forced to plead guilty for her friends; she however observed, in mitigation, "that when they were in town, what company they did see was always the best, she believed—that she knew, for one person, the Duchess of A——— was a friend of the Elmours, and corresponded with Ellen."

This judicious defence produced an

immediate effect upon Lady Stock's countenance, her eye-brows descended from the high arch of contempt, and after a pause, she remarked, " It was strange that they had not accepted of any of the invitations she had lately sent them—she fancied they were, as indeed they had the character of being, very proud people—and very odd."

Almeria denied the pride and the oddity; but observed, " that they were all remarkably fond of *home*."

" Well, my dear Miss Turnbull, that's what I call odd—but I am sure, I have nothing to say against all that; it is the fashion now to let every body do as they please—if the Elmours like to bury themselves alive, I'm sure I can't have the smallest objection; I only hope, they don't insist upon burying you along with them—I'm going to Harrowgate for a few days, and I must have you with me, my dear."

Our heroine hesitated—Lady Stock smiled and said, " she saw Miss Turnbull

was terribly afraid of these Elmours—that for her part, she was the last person in the world to break through old connexions; but that really some people ought to consider, that other people cannot always live as they do; that one style of life was fit for one style of fortune, and one for another; and that it would look very strange to the world, if an heiress with two hundred thousand pounds fortune, who if she produced herself might be in the first circles in town, were to be boxed up at Elmour Grove, and precluded from all advantages and offers, that she might of course expect."

To do our heroine justice, she here interrupted Lady Stock with more eagerness than strict politeness admitted, and positively declared, "that her friends never for one moment wished to confine her at Elmour Grove; on the contrary," said she, "they urged me to go into company, and to see something of the world before I"—marry, she was going to say—but paused.

Lady Stock waited for the finishing word, but when it did not come, she went on just as if it had been pronounced. "The Elmours do vastly right and proper to talk to you in this style, for they would be very much blamed in the world if they acted otherwise. You know young Elmour has his fortune to make—very clever certainly he is, and will rise—no doubt—I'm told—in his profession—but all that is not the same as a ready made fortune, which an heiress like you has a right to expect. But do not let me annoy you with my reflections. Perhaps there is nothing in the report—I really only repeat what I hear every body say. In what every body says, you know, there must be something. I positively think you ought to show, in justice to the Elmours themselves, that you are at liberty, and that they do not want to monopolize you—in this unaccountable sort of way."

To this last argument our heroine yielded, or to this she chose to attribute her yielding. She went to Harrowgate

with Lady Stock; and every day and every hour she became more desirous of appearing fashionable. To this one object all her thoughts were directed. Living in public was to her a new life, and she was continually sensible of her dependence upon the opinion of her more experienced companion. She felt the *awkwardness* of being surrounded by people, with whom she was unacquainted. At first, whenever she appeared she imagined that every body was looking at her, or talking about her, and she was in perpetual apprehension, that something in her dress or manners should become the subject of criticism or ridicule: but from this fear she was soon relieved, by the conviction, that most people were so occupied with themselves, as totally to overlook her. Sometimes indeed she heard the whispered question of—"Who is that with Lady Stock?" and the mortifying answer—"I do not know." However, when Lady Stock had introduced her to some of her acquaintance as a

great heiress, the scene changed—and she found herself treated with much *consideration*; though still the fashionable belles took sufficient care to make her sensible of her inferiority. She longed to be upon an equal footing with them. Whilst her mind was in this state, Sir Thomas Stock, one morning, when he was settling some money business with her, observed "that she would in another year be of age, and of course would take her affairs into her own hands; but in the mean time it would be necessary to appoint a guardian; and that the choice depended upon herself." She instantly named her friend Mr. Elmour. Sir Thomas insinuated, "That old Mr. Elmour, though undoubtedly a most unexceptionable character, was not exactly the most eligible person for a guardian to a young lady, whose large fortune entitled her to live in a fashionable style. That if it was Miss Turnbull's intention to fix in the country, Mr. Elmour certainly was upon the spot, and a very fit guardian; but

that if she meant to appear, as doubtless she would, in town, she would of course want another conductor."

"To cut the matter short at once, my dear," said Lady Stock, "you must come to town with me next winter, and choose Sir Thomas for your guardian. I'm sure it will give him the greatest pleasure in the world, to do any thing in his power—and you will have no difficulties with him; for you see he is not a man to bore you with all manner of advice; in short, he would only be your guardian for form's sake; and that, you know, would be the pleasantest footing imaginable. Come, here is a pen and ink, and gilt paper, write to old Elmour this minute, and let me have you all to myself."

Almeria was taken by surprise—she hesitated—all her former professions, all her obligations to the Elmour family, recurred to her mind—her friendship for Ellen—her love, or what she had thought love, for Frederick;—she could not decide upon a measure that might offend

them, or appear ungrateful, yet her desire of going to town with Lady Stock was ardent, and she knew not how to refuse Sir Thomas's offer, without displeasing him—she saw that all future connexion with *the Stocks* depended on her present determination—she took a middle course, and suggested that she might have two guardians, and then she should be able to avail herself of Sir Thomas's obliging offer, without offending her old friends. In consequence of this convenient arrangement, she wrote to Mr. Elmour, enclosing her letter in one to Ellen, in which the embarrassment and weakness of her mind were evident, notwithstanding all her endeavours to conceal them. After a whole page of incomprehensible apologies, for having so long delayed to write to her dearest Ellen; and after professions of the warmest affection, esteem, and gratitude, for her friends at Elmour Grove: she in the fourth page of her epistle opened her real business by declaring, that she should ever,

from the conviction she felt of the superiority of Ellen's understanding, follow her judgement, however repugnant it might sometimes be to her inclinations; that she therefore had resolved, in pursuance of Ellen's advice, to take an opportunity of seeing the gay world, and had accepted of an invitation from Lady Stock to spend the winter with her in town—that she had also accepted of Sir Thomas Stock's offer to become one of her guardians, as she thought it best to trouble her good friend Mr. Elmour as little as possible at his advanced age. In answer to this letter, she received a few lines from Mr. Elmour requesting to see her before she should go to town; accordingly upon her return to York, she went to Elmour Grove to take leave of her friends. She was under some anxiety, but resolved to carry it off with that ease, or affectation of ease, which she had learned during her six weeks' apprenticeship to a fine lady at Harrowgate. She was surprised, that no Frederick appeared to greet her arri-

val; the servant showed her into Mr. Elmour's study; the good old gentleman received her with that proud sort of politeness, which was always the sign, and the only sign, of his being displeased.

"You will excuse me, Miss Turnbull," said he, "for giving you the trouble of coming here; it was my business to have waited on you, but I have been so far unwell lately, that it was not in my power to leave home; and these are papers," continued he, "which I thought it my duty to deliver into your own hands."

Whilst Mr. Elmour was tying up these papers, and writing upon them, Almeria began two sentences with—"I hope"—and "I am afraid,"—without in the least knowing what she hoped or feared—She was not yet sufficiently perfect in the part of a fine lady to play it well.—Mr. Elmour looked up from his writing with an air of grave attention when she began to speak, but after waiting in vain for an intelligible sentence he proceeded.

"You have judged very wisely for me,

Miss Turnbull, in relieving my declining years from the fatigue of business; no man understands the management, or the value of money better than Sir Thomas Stock, and you could not, madam, in this point of view, have chosen a more proper guardian."

Almeria said, " that she hoped Mr. Elmour would always permit her to consider him as her best friend, to whose advice she should have recourse in preference to that of any person upon earth;" recovering her assurance as she went on speaking, and recollecting some of the hints Lady Stock had given her, about the envy and jealousy of the Elmours, and of their scheme of monopolizing her fortune; she added a few common place phrases about—respectability—gratitude—and great obligations—then gave a glance at Lady Stock's handsome carriage, which was waiting at the door—then asked for Miss Elmour—and hoped she should not be so unfortunate as to miss seeing her before she left the country, as

she came on purpose to take leave of her—then looked at her watch—but all this was said and done with the awkwardness of a novice in the art of giving herself airs. Mr. Elmour, without being in the least irritated by her manner, was all the time considering how he could communicate, with the least possible pain, what he had further to say—"You speak of me, Miss Turnbull, as of one of your guardians, in the letter I had the favour of receiving from you a few days ago," said he, "but you must excuse me for declining that honour. Circumstances have altered materially since I first undertook the management of your affairs, and my future interference, or perhaps even my advice, might not appear as disinterested as formerly."

Miss Turnbull here interrupted him with an exclamation of astonishment, and made many protestations of entire dependence upon his disinterested friendship. He waited with proud patience till she had finished her eulogium.

"How far the generous extent of your confidence, madam, reaches, or may hereafter reach," said he, "must be tried by others, not by me—nor yet by my son."

Almeria changed colour.

"He has left it to me, madam, to do that for him, which perhaps he feared he might not have sufficient resolution to do for himself—to return to you these letters and this picture; and to assure you that he considers you as entirely at liberty to form any connexion, that may be suited to your present views and circumstances."

Mr. Elmour put into her hand a packet of her own letters to Frederick, and a miniature picture of herself, which she had formerly given to her lover. This was an unexpected stroke. His generosity—his firmness of character—the idea of losing him for ever—all rushed upon her mind at once.

Artificial manners vanish the moment the natural passions are touched. Alme-

ria clasped her hands in an agony of grief and exclaimed, "Is he gone! gone for ever?—I have deserved it!"——The letters and picture fell from her hand—and she sunk back quite overpowered. When she recovered, she found herself in the open air on a seat under Mr. Elmour's study windows, and Ellen beside her.

"Pity, forgive, and advise me, my dear, my best, my only real friend," said Almeria—"never did I want your advice so much as at this moment."

"You shall have it, then, without reserve," said Ellen, "and without fear that it should be attributed to any unworthy motive. I could almost as soon wish for my brother's death, as desire to see him united to any woman, let her beauty and accomplishments be what they might, who had a mean or frivolous character, such as could consider money as the greatest good, or dissipation as the prime object of life.—I am firmly persuaded, my dear Almeria, that however you may be dazzled by the first view of

what is called fashionable life, you will soon see things as they really are, and that you will return to your former tastes and feelings."

"O! I am, I am returned to them!" cried Almeria; "I will write directly to Lady Stock, and to Sir Thomas, to tell them that I have changed my mind—only prevail upon your father to be my guardian."

"That is out of my power," said Ellen, "and I think that it is much better you should be as you are, left completely at liberty, and entirely independent of us. I advise you, Almeria, to persist in your scheme of spending the ensuing winter in town with Lady Stock—then you will have an opportunity of comparing your own different feelings, and of determining what things are essential to your happiness. If you should find, that the triumphs of fashion delight you more than the pleasures of domestic life—pursue them—your fortune will put it in your power; you will break no engagements;

and you will have no reproaches to fear from us. On the contrary, if you find that your happiness depends upon friendship and love, and that the life we formerly led together is that which you prefer, you will return to Elmour Grove, to your friend and your lover, and your choice will not be that of romance but of reason."

It was with difficulty that Almeria, in her present fit of enthusiasm, could be brought to listen to sober sense and true friendship. Her parting from Ellen and Mr. Elmour cost her many tears, and she returned to her fashionable friend with swollen eyes and a heavy heart. Her sorrow, however, was soon forgotten in the bustle and novelty of a new situation. Upon her arrival in London, fresh trains of ideas were quickly forced upon her mind, which were as dissimilar as possible from those associated with love, friendship, and Elmour Grove. At Sir Thomas Stock's every thing she saw and heard served to remind, or rather to con-

vince her, of the opulence of the owner of the house. Here every object was estimated, not for its beauty or elegance, but by its costliness. Money was the grand criterion, by which the worth of animate and inanimate objects was alike decided. In this society, the worship of the golden idol was avowed without shame or mystery; and all who did not bow the knee to it were considered as hypocrites or fools. Our heroine, possessed of two hundred thousand pounds, could not fail to have a large share of incense—every thing she said, or looked, was applauded in Sir Thomas Stock's family; and she would have found admiration delightful, if she had not suspected, that her fortune alone entitled her to all this applause. This was rather a mortifying reflection. By degrees, however, her delicacy on this subject abated; she learned philosophically to consider her fortune as a thing so immediately associated with herself as to form a part of her personal merit. Upon this principle, she soon became vain of

her wealth, and she was led to overrate the consequence, that riches bestow on their possessor.

In a capital city such numerous claimants for distinction appear, with beauty, birth, wit, fashion, or wealth to support their pretensions, that the vanity of an individual, however clamorous, is immediately silenced, if not humbled. When Miss Turnbull went into public, she was surprised by the discovery of her own, nay even of Lady Stock's insignificance. At York, her ladyship was considered as a personage high as human veneration could look; but in London, she was lost in a crowd of fellow mortals.

It is, perhaps, from this sense of humiliation, that individuals combine together, to obtain by their union that importance and self-complacency, which separately they could never enjoy. Miss Turnbull observed, that a numerous acquaintance was essential to those who live much in public—that the number of bows and curtsies, and the consequence of the per-

sons by whom they are given or received, is the measure of merit and happiness. Nothing can be more melancholy than most places of public amusement to those, who are strangers to the crowds which fill them.

Few people have such strength of mind as to be indifferent to the opinions of numbers even considered merely as numbers; hence those, who live in crowds, in fact surrender the power of thinking for themselves, either in trifles, or in matters of consequence. Our heroine had imagined, before she came to town, that Lady Stock moved in the highest circle of fashion; but she soon perceived, that many of the people of rank who visited her ladyship, and who partook of her sumptuous entertainments, thought they condescended extremely, whilst they paid this homage to wealth.

One night at the Opera, Almeria happened to be seated in the next box to Lady Bradstone, a proud woman of high family, who considered all, whose genea-

logy could not vie in antiquity with her own, as upstarts, that ought to be kept down. Her ladyship, either not knowing, or not caring, who was in the next box to her, began to ridicule an entertainment, which had been given a few days before by Lady Stock. From her entertainment, the transition was easy to her character, and to that of her whole family. Young Stock was pronounced to have all the purse-proud self-sufficiency of a banker and all the pertness of a clerk; even his bow seemed as if it came from behind the counter.

Till this moment, Almeria had, at least, permitted, if not encouraged, this gentleman's assiduities, for she had hitherto seen him only in company where he had been admired: his attentions, therefore, had been flattering to her vanity; but things now began to appear in quite a different light; she saw Mr. Stock in the point of view in which Lady Bradstone placed him; and felt that she might be degraded, but could not be elevated,

in the ranks of fashion by such an admirer. She began to wish, that she was not so intimately connected with a family which was ridiculed for want of taste, and whose wealth, as she now suspected, was their only ticket of admittance into the society of the truly elegant.—In the land of fashion " Alps on Alps arise," and no sooner has the votary reached the summit of one weary ascent, than another appears higher still and more difficult of attainment. Our heroine now became discontented in that situation, which but a few months before had been the grand object of her ambition.

In the mean time, as Mr. Stock had not over-heard Lady Bradstone's conversation at the Opera, and as he had a comfortably good opinion of himself, he was sure, that he was making a rapid progress in the lady's favour. He had, of late, seldom heard her mention any of her friends at Elmour Grove; and he was convinced that her romantic attachment to Frederick must have been conquered by

his own superior address. Her fortune was fully as agreeable to him, as to his money-making father: the only difference between them was, that he loved to squander, and his father to hoard gold. Extravagance frequently produces premature avarice—young Mr. Stock calculated Miss Turnbull's fortune, weighed it against that of every other young lady within the sphere of his attractions, found the balance in her favour by some thousands, made his proposal in form, and could not recover his astonishment, when he found himself in form rejected. Sir Thomas and Lady Stock used all their influence in his favour, but in vain; they concluded, that Almeria's passion for Frederick Elmour was the cause of this refusal; and they directed their arguments against the folly of marrying for love. Our heroine was, at this time, more in danger of the folly of marrying for fashion—not that she had fixed her fancy upon any man of fashion in particular; but she had formed an exalted idea

of the whole species—and she regretted that Frederick was not in that magic circle, in which all her hopes of happiness now centred. She wrote kind letters to Miss Elmour, but each letter was written with greater difficulty than the preceding; for she had lost all interest in the occupations, which formerly were so delightful. She and Ellen had now few ideas in common, and her epistles dwindled into apologies for long silence—promises of being a better correspondent in future—reasons for breaking these promises—hopes of pardon, &c. Ellen, however, continued steady in her belief, that her friend would at last prove worthy of her esteem, and of her brother's love. The rejection of Mr. Stock, which Almeria did not fail to mention, confirmed this favourable opinion.

When that gentleman was at length with some difficulty convinced, that our heiress had decided against him, his manners and those of his family changed towards her from the extreme of civility to

that of rudeness—they spoke of her as a coquette and a jilt, and a person who gave herself very extraordinary airs. She was vexed, and alarmed—and in her first confusion and distress thought of retreating to her friends at Elmour Grove. She wrote a folio sheet to Ellen, unlike her late apologetic epistles, full of the feelings of her heart, and of a warm invective against fashionable and interested *friends*. After a narrative of her quarrel with the Stocks, she declared that she would immediately quit her London acquaintance, and return to her best friend. But the very day after she had dispatched this letter, she changed her mind, and formed a new idea of a *best friend.*

One morning she went with Lady Stock to a bookseller's whose shop served as a fashionable *lounge.* Her ladyship valued books like all other things in proportion to the money which they cost: she had no taste for literature, but a great fancy for accumulating the most expensive publications, which she dis-

played ostentatiously as part of the costly furniture of her house. Whilst she was looking over some literary luxuries, rich in all the elegance of hot-press and vellum binding, Lady Bradstone and a party of her friends came into the room. She immediately attracted and engrossed the attention of all present. Lady Stock turned over the leaves of her fine books, and asked their prices; but she had the mortification to perceive, that she was an object rather of derision than of admiration to the new comers. None are so easily put out of countenance by airs as those, who are most apt to play them off on their inferiors. Lady Stock bit her lips in evident embarrassment, and the awkwardness of her distress increased the confidence and triumph of her adversary. She had some time before provoked Lady Bradstone by giving a concert in opposition to one of hers, and by engaging, at an enormous expense, a celebrated performer for *her night:* hostilities had thenceforward been renewed at every con-

venient opportunity, by the contending fair ones. Lady Bradstone now took occasion loudly to lament her extreme poverty, and she put this question to all her party, whether if they had it in their power, they should prefer having more money than taste, or taste than money?—They were going to decide *par acclamation*, but her ladyship insisted upon taking each vote separately, because this prolonged the torments of her rival, who heard the preference of taste to money reiterated half a dozen times over, with the most provoking variety of insulting emphasis. Almeria's sufferings during this scene were far more poignant than those of the person against whom the ridicule was aimed; not that she pitied Lady Stock—no; she would have rejoiced to have seen her humbled to the dust, if she could have escaped all share in her mortification: but as she appeared as her ladyship's acquaintance, she apprehended that she might be mistaken for her friend. An opportunity offered of marking the difference. The

bookseller asked Lady Stock if she chose to put her name down in a list of subscribers to a new work. The book, she saw, was to be dedicated to Lady Bradstone —and that was sufficient to decide her against it.

She declared, that she never supported such things either by her name or her money; that for her part she was no politician; that she thought female patriots were absurd and odious; and that she was glad none of that description were of her acquaintance.

All this was plainly directed against Lady Bradstone, who was a zealous patriot; her ladyship retorted, by some reflections equally keen, but rather more politely expressed, each party addressing their inuendoes to the bookseller, who, afraid to disoblige either the rich or the fashionable, preserved, as much as it was in the power of his muscles, a perfectly neutral countenance. At last, in order to relieve himself from his constraint, he betook himself to count the subscribers, and

Miss Turnbull seized this moment to desire that her name might be added to the list. Lady Bradstone's eyes were immediately fixed upon her with complacency —Lady Stock's flashed fire. Regardless of their fire, Almeria coolly added— "Twelve copies, Sir, if you please."

"Twelve copies, Miss Turnbull, at a guinea a piece! Lord bless me, do you know what you are about, my dear?" said Lady Stock.

"Perfectly well," replied our heroine; "I think twelve guineas, or twenty times that sum, would be well bestowed in asserting independence of sentiment, which I understand is the object of this work." —A whisper from Lady Bradstone to one of the shopmen, of "Who is that charming woman?" gave our heroine courage to pronounce these words. Lady Stock in great displeasure walked to her carriage, saying—

"You are to consider what you will do with your twelve copies, Miss Turnbull, for I am convinced your guardian will

never let such a parcel of inflammatory trash into his house: he admires female patriotism, and *all that sort of thing* as little as I do."

The rudeness of this speech did not disconcert Almeria, for she was fortified by the consciousness, that she had gained her point with Lady Bradstone. This lady piqued herself upon showing her preferences and aversions with equal enthusiasm and eclat. She declared before a large company at dinner, that notwithstanding Miss Turnbull was *nobody* by birth, she had made herself *somebody* by spirit; and that for her part, she should, contrary to her general principle, which she confessed was to keep a strong line of demarcation between nobility and mobility, take a pride in bringing forward merit even in the shape of a Yorkshire Grazier's daughter.

Pursuant to this gracious declaration, she empowered a common friend to introduce Miss Turnbull to her, on the first opportunity. When people really wish to become acquainted with each other, op-

portunities are easily and quickly found. The parties met to their mutual satisfaction that very night in the coffee-room of the Opera House; conversed more in five minutes than people in town usually converse in five months or years, when it is their wish to keep on a merely civil footing. But this was not the footing on which Miss Turnbull desired to be with Lady Bradstone; she took the utmost pains to please, and succeeded. She owed her success chiefly to the dexterous manner in which she manifested her contempt for her late dear friend Lady Stock. Her having refused an alliance with the family was much in her favour; her ladyship admired her spirit, but little suspected that the contemptuous manner in which she had once been overheard to speak of this *banker's son*, was the real and immediate cause of his rejection. The phrase—" *Only* Stock the banker's son"—decided his fate—so much may be done by the mere emphasis on a single word from fashionable lips! Our heroine

managed with considerable address, in bringing her quarrel with one friend to a crisis, at the moment when another was ready to receive her. An ostensible pretext is never wanting to those, who are resolved on war. The book to which Miss Turnbull had subscribed was the pretext upon this occasion: nothing could be more indifferent to her than politics; but Lady Bradstone's party and principles were to be defended at all events. Sir Thomas Stock protested, that he might be hurt essentially in the opinion of those, for whom he had the highest consideration, if a young lady living under his roof, known to be his ward, and probably presumed to be guided by him, should put her name as subscriber to twelve copies of a work patronized by Lady Bradstone. "The mere circumstance of its being dedicated to her ladyship showed what it *must* be," Sir Thomas observed; and he made it a point with Miss Turnbull, that she should withdraw her name from the subscription. This Miss Turnbull abso-

lutely refused. Lady Bradstone was her confidant upon the occasion, and half a dozen notes a day passed between them; at length the affair was brought to the long wished for crisis. Lady Bradstone invited Miss Turnbull to her house, feeling herself, as she said, bound in honour to *bear her out* in a dispute, of which she had been the original occasion. In this lady's society, Almeria found the style of dress, manners, and conversation, different from what she had seen at Lady Stock's—she had without difficulty imitated the affectation of Lady Stock, but there was an ease in the decided tone of Lady Bradstone, which could not be so easily acquired. Having lived from her infancy in the best company, there was no heterogeneous mixtures in her manners; and the consciousness of this gave an habitual air of security to her words, looks, and motions. Lady Stock seemed forced to beg, or buy—Lady Bradstone, accustomed to command, or levy, admiration as her rightful tribute. The pride of

Lady Bradstone was uniformly resolute, and successful; the insolence of Lady Stock, if it were opposed, became cowardly and ridiculous. Lady Bradstone seemed to have on all occasions, an instinctive sense of what a person of fashion ought to do; Lady Stock notwithstanding her bravadoing air, was frequently perplexed, and anxious, and therefore awkward—she had always recourse to precedents. "Lady P——— said so—or Lady Q——— did so—Lady G——— wore this, or Lady H—— was there, and therefore I am sure it was proper."

On the contrary, Lady Bradstone never quoted authorities, but presumed that she was a precedent for others. The one was eager to follow—the other determined to lead, the fashion.

Our heroine, who was by no means deficient in penetration, and whose whole attention was now given to the study of externals, quickly perceived these shades of difference between her late and her present friend. She remarked, in parti-

cular, that she found herself much more at ease in Lady Bradstone's society. Her ladyship's pride was not so offensive as Lady Stock's vanity: secure of her own superiority, Lady Bradstone did not want to measure herself every instant with inferiors. She treated Almeria as her equal in every respect; and in setting her right in points of fashion never seemed to triumph, but to consider her own knowledge as a necessary consequence of the life she had led from her infancy. With a sort of proud generosity she always considered those, whom she honoured with her friendship, as thenceforward entitled to all the advantages of her own situation, and to all the respect due to a part of herself. She now always used the word we, with peculiar emphasis, in speaking of Miss Turnbull and herself. This was a signal perfectly well understood by her acquaintance. Almeria was received every where with the most distinguished attention; and she was delighted, and absolutely intoxicated, with her sudden rise

in the world of fashion. She found that her former acquaintance at Lady Stock's were extremely ambitious of claiming an intimacy; but this could not be done. Miss Turnbull had now acquired, by practice, the power of looking at people, without seeming to see them; and of forgetting those with whom she was perfectly well acquainted. Her opinion of her own consequence was much raised by the court that was paid to her by several young men of fashion, who thought it expedient to marry two hundred thousand pounds.

How quickly ambition extends her views! Our heroine's highest object had lately been to form an alliance with a man of fashion; she had now three fashionable admirers in her train; but though she was altered by their attention, she had not the least inclination to decide in favour of any of these candidates. The only young man of her present acquaintance, who seemed to be out of the reach of her power, was Lord Bradstone; and

upon the conquest of his heart, or rather his pride, her fancy was fixed. He had all his mother's family pride, and he had been taught by her to expect an alliance with a daughter of one of the first noble families in England. The possibility of his marrying a grazier's daughter had never entered into his or Lady Bradstone's thoughts; they saw, indeed, every day, examples, among the first nobility, of such matches; but they saw them with contempt. Almeria knew this, and yet she did not despair of success: nor was she wrong in her calculations. Lord Bradstone was fond of high play—his taste for gaming soon reduced him to distress—his guardian was enraged, and absolutely refused to pay his lordship's debts. What was to be done?—He must extricate himself from his difficulties by marrying some rich heiress. Juxtaposition makes more matches than all the other arts of Cupid. Miss Turnbull was the heiress nearest at hand. Lord Bradstone's pride was compelled to yield to his interest, and he re-

solved to pay his addresses to the Yorkshire grazier's daughter; but he knew that his mother would be indignant at this idea; and he therefore determined to proceed cautiously, and to assure himself of the young lady's approbation before he should brave his mother's anger.

The winter was now passed, and her ladyship invited Miss Turnbull to accompany her to Cheltenham; her son was of the party. Our heroine plainly understood his intentions, and her friendship for Lady Bradstone did not prevent her from favouring his views: neither was she deterred by her knowledge of his lordship's taste for play, so ardent was her desire for a coronet. The recollection of Frederick Elmour sometimes crossed her imagination, and struck her heart; but the pang was soon over, and she settled her conscience by the reflection, that she was not, in the least degree, bound in honour to him—he had set her entirely at liberty, and could not complain of her conduct. As to Ellen—every day she

determined to write to her, and every day she put it off till to morrow; at last she was saved the trouble of making and breaking any more resolutions, for one evening, as she was walking with Lady Bradstone and her noble admirer, in the public walk, she met Miss Elmour and her brother.

She accosted Ellen with great eagerness, but it was plain to her friend's discerning eyes, that her joy was affected. After repeating several times, that she was quite delighted at this unexpected meeting, she ran on with a number of common place questions, commencing and concluding with—

"When did you come?—How long do you stay?—Where do you lodge?"

"We have been here about a fortnight, and I believe we shall stay about a month longer."

"Indeed!—A month!—So long!—How fortunate!—But where are you?"

"We lodge a little out of the town, on the road to Cirencester."

"How unfortunate!—We are at such a shocking distance!—I'm with Lady Bradstone—a most charming woman!—Who are you with?"

"With my poor father," said Ellen; "he has been very ill lately, and we came here on his account."

"Ill!—Old Mr. Elmour!—I'm extremely concerned—but whom have you to attend him?—You should send to town for Dr. Grant—do you know he is the only man now?—the only man Lady Bradstone and I have any dependence on—If I was dying, he is the man I should send for. Do have him for Mr. Elmour, my dear—and don't be alarmed above all things—you know it's so natural, at your father's age, that he should not be as well as he has been—but I distress you—and detain you."

Our heroine, after running off these unmeaning sentences, passed on, being ashamed to walk with Ellen in public, because Lady Bradstone had whispered, "*Who is she?*"—Not to be known in the

world of fashion is an unpardonable crime, for which no merit can atone.—Three days elapsed before Miss Turnbull went to see her friends, notwithstanding her extreme concern for poor Mr. Elmour. Her excuse to her conscience was, that Lady Bradstone's carriage could not sooner be spared. People in a certain rank of life are, or make themselves, slaves to horses and carriages; with every apparent convenience and luxury, they are frequently more dependent than their tradesman or their servants. There was a time, when Almeria would not have been restrained by these imaginary *impossibilities* from showing kindness to her friends, but that time was now completely past. She was, at present, anxious to avoid having any private conversation with Ellen, because she was ashamed to avow her change of views and sentiments. In the short morning visit, which she paid her, Almeria talked of public places, of public characters, of dress and equipages, &c. She inquired, indeed, with a modish air

of infinite sensibility, for poor Mr. Elmour; and when she heard that he was confined to his bed, she regretted most excessively that she could not see him; but a few seconds afterwards, with a suitable change of voice and countenance, she made an easy transition to the praise of a new dress of Lady Bradstone's invention. Frederick Elmour came into the room in the midst of the eulogium on her ladyship's taste—she was embarrassed for a moment; but quickly recovering the tone of a fine lady, she spoke to him as if he had never been any thing to her but a common acquaintance. The dignity and firmness of his manner provoked her pride; she wished to coquet with him—she tried to excite his jealousy by talking of Lord Bradstone; but vain were all her airs and inuendoes, they could not extort from him even a sigh. She was somewhat consoled, however, by observing in his sister's countenance the expression, as she thought, of extreme mortification.

A few days after this visit, Miss Turn-

bull received the following note from Miss Elmour:

"MY DEAR ALMERIA,

If you still wish that I should treat you as a friend, show me that you do, and you will find my affection unaltered. If, on the contrary, you have decided to pursue a mode of life, or to form connexions, which make you ashamed to own any one for a friend who is not a fine lady, let our intimacy be dissolved for ever—it could only be a source of mutual pain. My father is better to day, and wishes to see you. Will you spend this evening with him and with

Your affectionate

ELLEN ELMOUR?"

It happened, that the very day Miss Turnbull received this note, Lady Bradstone was to have a concert, and Almeria knew that her ladyship would be offended if she were to spend the evening with the Elmours: it was, as she said to herself, *impossible*, therefore, to accept of Ellen's

invitation. She called upon her in the course of the morning to make an apology. She found Ellen beside her father, who was seated in his arm-chair: he looked extremely pale and weak: she was at first shocked at the change she saw in her old friend, and she could not utter the premeditated apology. Ellen took it for granted, that she was come, in consequence of her note, to spend the day with her, and she embraced her with affectionate joy. Her whole countenance changed, when our heroine began at last to talk of Lady Bradstone and the concert—Ellen burst into tears.

"My dear child," said Mr. Elmour, putting his hand upon his daughter's which rested upon the arm of his chair, "I did not expect this weakness from you."

Miss Turnbull, impatient to shorten a scene which she had neither strength of mind to endure, nor to prevent, rose to take leave.

"My dear Ellen," said she, in an irre-

solute tone, "my dearest creature, you must not distress yourself in this way—I must have you keep up your spirits. You confine yourself too much, indeed you do; and you see you are not equal to it. Your father will be better, and he will persuade you to leave him for an hour or two, I am sure, and we must have you amongst us; and I must introduce you to Lady Bradstone—she's a charming woman, I assure you—you would like her of all things, if you knew her. Come—don't let me see you in this way. Really, my dear Ellen, this is so unlike you—I can assure you, that whatever you may think, I love you as well as ever I did, and never shall forget my obligations to *all* your family; but you know, a person who lives in the world as I do, must make such terrible sacrifices of their time—one can't do as one pleases—one's an absolute slave. So you must forgive me, dear Ellen, for bidding you farewell for the present."

Ellen hastily wiped away her tears, and

turning to Almeria with an air of dignity, held out her hand to her, and said—

"Farewell for ever, Almeria!—May you never feel the want of a sincere and affectionate friend!—May the triumphs of fashion make you amends for all you sacrifice to obtain them!"

Miss Turnbull was abashed and agitated—she hurried out of the room to conceal her confusion, stepped into a carriage with a coronet, drove away, and endeavoured to forget all that had passed. The concert in the evening recalled her usual train of ideas, and she persuaded herself, that she had done all, and more than was necessary, in offering to introduce Ellen to Lady Bradstone. "How could she neglect such an offer?"

A few days after the concert, Almeria had the pleasure of being introduced to Lady Bradstone's four daughters—Lady Gabriella, Lady Agnes, Lady Bab, and Lady Kitty. Of the existence of these young ladies Almeria had scarcely heard —they had been educated at a fashion-

able boarding-school; and their mother was now under the disagreeable necessity of bringing them home to live with her, because the eldest was past seventeen.

Lady Gabriella was a beauty, and determined to be a Grace—but which of the three graces, she had not yet decided.

Lady Agnes was plain, and resolved to be *odd*, and a wit.

Lady Bab and Lady Kitty were charming hoydens, with all the *modern* simplicity of fourteen or fifteen in their manners. Lady Bab had a fine long neck, which was always in motion—Lady Kitty had white teeth, and was always laughing; but it is impossible to characterize them, for they differed in nothing from a thousand other young ladies.

These four sisters agreed in but one point—in considering their mother as their common enemy. Taking it for granted, that Miss Turnbull was her friend, she was looked upon by them as being naturally entitled to a share of their distrust and enmity. They found a variety

of causes of complaint against our heroine; and if they had been at any loss, their respective waiting-maids would have furnished them with inexhaustible causes of quarrel.

Lady Bradstone could not bear to go with more than four in a coach.—"Why was Miss Turnbull always to have a front seat in the coach, and two of the young ladies to be always left at home on her account?"—"How could Lady Bradstone make such a favourite of a grazier's daughter, and prefer her to her own children, as a companion?" &c.

The young ladies never discouraged their attendants from saying all the ill-natured things that they could devise of Miss Turnbull, and they invented a variety of methods of tormenting her. Lady Gabriella found out, that Almeria was an old maid, and horridly ugly and awkward; Lady Agnes *quizzed* her perpetually; and the Ladies Bab and Kitty played upon her innumerable practical jokes. She was astonished to find in high life a degree of vulgarity, of which her

country companions would have been ashamed; but all such things in high life go under the general term *dashing*. These young ladies were *dashers*. Alas! perhaps foreigners and future generations may not know the meaning of the term!

Our heroine's temper was not proof against the trials, to which it was hourly exposed: perhaps the consciousness, that she was not born to the situation in which she now moved, joined to her extreme anxiety to be thought genteel and fashionable, rendered her peculiarly irritable, when her person and manners were attacked by ladies of quality. She endeavoured to conciliate her young enemies by every means in her power; and at length she found a method of pleasing them. They were immoderately fond of baubles: and they had not money enough to gratify this taste. Miss Turnbull at first, with great timidity, begged Lady Gabriella's acceptance of a ring, which seemed particularly to catch her fancy: the facility with which the ring was ac-

cepted, and the favourable change it produced, as if by magic, in her ladyship's manners towards our heroine, encouraged her to try similar experiments upon the other sisters. She spared not ear-rings, crosses, broaches, pins, and necklaces; and the young ladies in return began to show her all the friendship, which can be purchased by such presents—or by any presents. Even whilst she rejoiced at the change in their behaviour, she could not avoid despising them for the cause to which she knew it must be attributed; nor did she long enjoy even the temporary calm procured by these peace-offerings; for the very same things, which propitiated the daughters, offended the mother. Lady Bradstone one morning insisted upon Lady Gabriella's returning a necklace, which she had received from Almeria; and her ladyship informed Miss Turnbull, at the same time, with an air of supreme haughtiness, that "she could not possibly permit *her* daughters to accept such valuable presents from any but

their own relations; that if the Lady Bradstones did not know what became them, it was her duty to teach them propriety."

It was rather late in life to begin to teach, even if they had been inclined to learn. They resented her last lesson, or rather her last act of authority, with acrimony proportioned to the value of the object; and Miss Turnbull was compelled to hear their complaints. Lady Gabriella said, she was convinced that her mother's only reason for making her return the necklace was because she had not one quite so handsome. Lady Agnes, between whom and her mamma there was pending a dispute about a pair of diamond ear-rings, left by her grandmother, observed, "that her mother might, if she pleased, call *jealousy, propriety;* but that she must not be surprised if other people used the old vocabulary; that her mamma's pride and vanity were always at war; for that though she was proud enough to see her daughters *show well* in public, yet

she required to have it said, that she looked younger than any of them, and that she was infinitely better-dressed."

Lady Bab and Lady Kitty did not fail in this favourable moment of general discontent to bring forward their list of grievances, and in the discussion of their rights and wrongs they continually appealed to our heroine, crowding round her whilst she stood silent and embarrassed. Ashamed of them and of herself, she compared the Lady Bradstones with Ellen—she compared the sisters-in-law she was soon to have, with the friend she had forsaken. The young ladies mistook the expression of melancholy, in Almeria's countenance, at this instant, for sympathy in their sorrows; and her silence, for acquiescence in the justice of their complaints. They were reiterating their opinions with something like plebeian loudness of voice, when their mother entered the room. The ease with which her daughters changed their countenances and the subject of conversation, when she entered,

might have prevented all suspicion but for the blushes of Almeria, who, though of all the party she was the least guilty, looked by far the most abashed. The necklace which hung from her hand, and on which in the midst of her embarrassment her eyes involuntarily fell, seemed to Lady Bradstone proof positive against her. Her ladyship recollected certain words she had heard as she opened the door, and now applied them without hesitation to herself. Politeness restrained the expression of her anger towards Miss Turnbull, but it burst furious forth upon her daughters; and our heroine was now as much alarmed by the violence of her future mother-in-law, as she had been disgusted by the meanness of her *intended* sisters. From this day forward, Lady Bradstone's manner changed towards Almeria, who could plainly perceive, by her altered eye, that she had lost her confidence, and that her ladyship considered her as one who was playing a double part, and fomenting dissensions in her

family. She thought herself bound, in honour to the daughters, not to make any explanation that could throw the blame upon them; and she bore in painful silence the many oblique reproaches, reflections upon ingratitude, dissimulation, and treachery, which she knew were aimed at her. The consciousness, that she was treating Lady Bradstone with insincerity, in encouraging the addresses of her son, increased Miss Turnbull's embarrassment; she repented having for a moment encouraged his clandestine attachment; and she now urged him in the strongest manner to impart his intentions to his mother. He assured her, that she should be obeyed, but his obedience was put off from day to day; and in the mean time, the more Almeria saw of his family, the more her desire to be connected with them diminished. The affair of the necklace was continually renewed, in some shape or other, and a perpetual succession of petty disputes occurred, in which both parties

were in the wrong, and each openly or secretly blamed her for not taking their part. Her mind was so much harassed, that all her natural cheerfulness forsook her; and the being obliged to assume spirits in company, and among people, who were not worth the toil of pleasing, became every hour more irksome. The transition from these domestic miseries to public dissipation and gaieties, made her still more melancholy.

When she calmly examined her own heart, she perceived that she felt little or no affection for Lord Bradstone, though she had been flattered by his attentions, when the assiduity of a man of rank and fashion was new to her: but now the joys of being a countess began to fade in her imagination.—She hesitated—she had not strength of mind sufficient to decide—she was afraid to proceed; yet she had not courage to retract.

Ellen's parting words recurred to her mind—"May you never feel the want of a sincere and affectionate friend! May

the triumphs of fashion make you amends for all you sacrifice to obtain them!"—"Alas!" thought she, "Ellen foresaw, that I should soon be disgusted with this joyless, heartless intercourse; but how can I recede? but how can I disengage myself from this Lord Bradstone, now that I have encouraged his addresses?—Fool that I have been!—O, if I could now be advised by that best of friends, who used to assist me in all my difficulties!—But she despises, she has renounced me—she has bid me farewell for ever!"

Notwithstanding this "farewell for ever," there was still at the bottom of Almeria's heart, even whilst she bewailed herself in this manner, a secret hope that Ellen's esteem and friendship might be recovered, and she resolved to make the trial. She was eager to put this idea into execution the moment it occurred to her; and after apologizing to the Lady Bradstones for not, as usual, accompanying them in their morning ride, she set out to walk to Miss Elmour's lodgings. It

was a hot day—she walked fast, from the hurry and impatience of her mind. The servant who attended her knocked twice at Mr. Elmour's door before any one answered; at last the door was opened by a maid-servant, with a broom in her hand.

"Is Miss Elmour at home?"

"No, Sir—she left Cheltenham this morning betimes, and we bee getting the house ready for other lodgers."

Almeria was very much disappointed—she looked flushed and fatigued, and the maid said,

"Ma'am, if you'll be pleased to rest a while, you're welcome, I'm sure—and the parlour's cleaned out—be pleased to sit down, ma'am."—Almeria followed, for she was really tired, and glad to accept the good-natured offer. She was shown into the same parlour, where she had but a few weeks before taken leave of Ellen. The maid rolled forward the great arm-chair in which old Mr. Elmour had

been seated, and as she moved it a gold-headed cane fell to the ground.

Almeria's eyes turned upon it directly as it fell; for it was an old friend of hers: many a time she had played with it when she was a child, and for many years she had been accustomed to see it in the hand of a man whom she loved and respected. It brought many pleasing and some painful associations to her mind—for she reflected how ill she had behaved to the owner of it the last time she saw him.

"Aye, ma'am," said the maid, "it is the poor old gentleman's cane, sure enough—it has never been stirred from here, nor his hat and gloves, see, since the day he died."

"Died!—Good Heavens!—Is Mr. Elmour dead?"

"Yes, sure—he died last Tuesday, and was buried yesterday.—You'd better drink some of this water, ma'am," said the girl, filling a glass that stood on the table.—"Why! dear heart! I would not have mentioned it so sudden in this way,

but I thought it could no way hurt you. Why, it never came into my head you could be a friend of the family's, nor more may be, at the utmost, than an acquaintance, as you never used to call much during his illness."

This was the most cutting reproach, and the innocence with which it was uttered made it still more severe. Almeria burst into tears; and the poor girl, not knowing what to say next, and sorry for all she had said, took up the cane which had fallen from Almeria's hands, and applied herself to brightening the gold head with great diligence. At this instant there was a double knock at the house-door.

"It's only the young gentleman, ma'am," said the maid, as she went towards the door.—"What young gentleman?" said Almeria, rising from her seat. —"Young Mr. Elmour, ma'am: he did not go away with his sister, but stayed to settle some matters.—O, they have let him in."—The maid stood with the par-

lour door half open in her hand, not being able to decide in her own fancy whether the lady wished that he should come into the room or stay out; and before either she, or perhaps Almeria, had decided this point, it was settled for them by his walking in. Almeria was standing so as to be hid by the door, and he was so intent upon his own thoughts, that, without perceiving there was any body in the room, he walked straight forward to the table, took up his father's hat and gloves, and gave a deep sigh. He heard his sigh echoed—looked up, and started at the sight of Almeria, but immediately assumed an air of distant and cold respect. He was in deep mourning, and looked pale, as if he had suffered much. Almeria endeavoured to speak; but could get out only a few words, expressive of *the shock and astonishment* she had just felt.

"Undoubtedly, madam, you must have been shocked," replied Frederick, in a calm voice; "but you could not have

reason to be much astonished. My father's life had been despaired of some time—you must have seen how much he was changed when you were here a few weeks ago." Almeria could make no reply: the tears, in spite of all her efforts to restrain them, rolled down her cheeks: the cold, and almost severe, manner in which Frederick spoke, and the consciousness that she deserved it, struck her to the heart. He followed her, as she abruptly quitted the room, and in a tone of more kindness, but with the same distant manner, begged to have the honour of attending her home. She bowed her head to give that assent, which her voice could not at this instant utter; and she was involuntarily going to put her arm within his; but as he did not seem to perceive this motion she desisted, coloured violently, adjusted the drapery of her gown to give employment to the neglected hand; then walked on with precipitation. Her foot slipped as she was crossing the street; Frederick offered his arm—she could not

guess, from the way in which it was presented, whether her former attempt had been perceived or not. This trifle appeared to her a point of the utmost importance, for by this she thought she could decide, whether his feelings were really as cold towards her as they appeared, whether he felt love and anger, or contempt and indifference. Whilst she was endeavouring in vain to form her opinion, all the time she leant upon his arm, and walked on in silence. A carriage passed them, Frederick bowed, and his countenance was suddenly illuminated. Almeria turned eagerly to see the cause of the change, and as the carriage drove on she caught a glimpse of a beautiful young woman. A spasm of jealousy seized her heart—she withdrew her arm from Frederick's. The abruptness of the action did not create any emotion in him—his thoughts were absent. In a few minutes he slackened his pace, and turned from the road towards a path across the fields, asking if Miss Turnbull

had any objection to going that way to Lady Bradstone's instead of along the dusty road. She made no objection—she thought she perceived that Frederick was preparing to say something of importance to her, and her heart beat violently.

"Miss Turnbull will not, I hope, think what I am going to say impertinent; she may be assured, that it proceeds from no motive but the desire to prevent the future unhappiness of one, who once honoured my family with her friendship."

"You are too good—I do not deserve, that you should be interested in my happiness or unhappiness—I cannot think you impertinent—pray speak freely."

"And quickly," she would have added if she dared.—Without abating any of his reserve from this encouragement, he proceeded precisely in the same tone as before, and with the same steady composure.

"An accidental acquaintance with a friend of my Lord Bradstone's has put me in possession of what, perhaps, you wish

to be a secret, madam, and what I shall inviolably keep as such."

"I cannot pretend to be ignorant of what you allude to," said Almeria, "but it is more than probable, that you may not have heard the exact state of the business; indeed it is impossible that you should, because no one but myself could fully explain my sentiments. In fact they were undecided; I was this very morning going to consult your sister upon that subject."

"You will not suppose, that I am going to intrude my counsels upon you, Miss Turnbull. Nothing can be further from my intention—I am merely going to mention a fact to you, of which I apprehend you ae ignorant, and of which, as you are circumstanced, no one in your present society, perhaps no one in the world but myself, would choose to apprise you. Forgive me, madam, if I try your patience by this preface: I am very desirous not to wound your feelings more than is necessary."

"Perhaps," said Almeria, with a doubtful smile, "perhaps you are under a mistake, and imagine my feelings to be much more interested than they really are. If you have any thing to communicate to Lord Bradstone's disadvantage, you may mention it to me without hesitation, and without fear of injuring my happiness, or his; for, to put you at ease at once, I am come to a determination positively to decline his lordship's addresses."

"This assurance certainly puts me at ease at once," said Frederick; but Almeria observed that he neither expressed by his voice nor countenance any of that joy, which she had hoped to inspire by the assurance: on the contrary, he heard it as a determination, in which he was personally unconcerned, and in which pure benevolence alone could give him an interest. "This relieves me," continued he, "from all necessity of explaining myself further."

"Nay," said Almeria, "but I must beg you will explain yourself. You do not

know but it may be necessary for me to have your antidote ready in case of a relapse."

No change, at least none that betrayed the anxiety of a lover, was visible in Frederick's countenance at this hint of a relapse, but he gravely answered that, when so urged, he could not forbear to tell her the exact truth, that Lord Bradstone was a ruined man—ruined by gaming—and that he had been so indelicate, as to declare to his *friend*, that his sole object in marrying was money. Our heroine's pride was severely hurt by the last part of this information, but even that did not wound her so keenly as the manner in which Frederick behaved. She saw that he had no remains of affection for her lurking in his heart—she saw that he now acted merely as he declared, from a desire to save from misery one who had formerly honoured his family with her friendship.—Stiff, cold words—she endeavoured to talk upon indifferent subjects, but could not—she was somewhat relieved

when they reached Lady Bradstone's door, and when Frederick left her. The moment he was gone, however, she ran up stairs to her own apartment, and looked eagerly out of her window to catch the last glimpse of him. Such is the strange caprice of the human heart, that a lover appears the most valuable at the moment he is lost. Our heroine had felt all her affection for Frederick revive with more than its former force within this last hour, and she thought she now loved with a degree of passion, of which she had never before found herself capable. Hope is perhaps inseparable from the existence of the passion of love. She passed alternately from despair to the most flattering delusions: she fancied that Frederick's coldness was affected—that he was acting only from honour—that he wished to leave her at liberty—and that as soon as he knew she was actually disengaged from Lord Bradstone he would fly to her with all his former eagerness. This notion having once taken possession of her mind, she was impatient

in the extreme to settle her affairs with Lord Bradstone. He was not at home—he did not come in till late in the evening. It happened, that the next day Almeria was to be of age; and Lord Bradstone, when he met her in the evening, reminded her of her promise not "to prolong the torments of suspense beyond that period." She asked, whether he had, in compliance with her request, communicated the affair to Lady Bradstone?—No: but he would as soon as he had reasonable grounds of hope. Miss Turnbull rejoiced that he had disobeyed her injunctions—she said that Lady Bradstone might now be for ever spared hearing what would have inevitably excited her indignation. His lordship stared, and could not comprehend our heroine's present meaning. She soon made it intelligible. We forbear to relate all that was said upon the occasion; as it was a disappointment of the purse and not of the heart: his lordship was of course obliged to make a proportional quantity

of professions of eternal sorrow and disinterestedness. Almeria, partly to save her own pride the mortification of the repetition, forbore to allude to the confidential speech in which he had explained to *a friend* his motives for marrying; she hoped that he would soon console himself with some richer heiress, and she rejoiced to be disencumbered of him, and even of his coronet; for in this moment coronets seemed to her but paltry things—so much does the appearance of objects vary according to the medium through which they are viewed!

Better satisfied with herself after this refusal of the earl, and in better spirits than she had been for some months, she flattered herself with the hopes, that Frederick would call upon her again before he left Cheltenham; he would then know that Lord Bradstone was no longer her lover.

She fell asleep full of these imaginations—dreamed of Frederick and Elmour Grove—but this was only a dream. The

next day—and the next—and the next—passed without her seeing or hearing any thing of Frederick; and the fourth day, as she rode by the house where the Elmours had lodged, she saw put up in the parlour window an advertisement of "*Lodgings to be let.*" She was now convinced, that Frederick had left Cheltenham—left it without thinking of her or of Lord Bradstone. The young lady Bradstones observed, that she scarcely spoke a word during the remainder of her morning's ride. At night she was attacked with a feverish complaint: the image of the beautiful person, whom she had seen in the coach that passed whilst she was walking with Frederick, was now continually before her eyes. She had made all the inquiries she could, to find out who that young lady might be, but this point could not be ascertained, because, though she described the lady accurately, she was not equally exact about the description of the carriage. The arms and livery had totally escaped her observa-

tion. The different conjectures that had been made by the various people to whom she had applied, and the voices in which their answers were given, ran in her head all this feverish night.

"Perhaps it was Lady Susanna Quin—very likely it was Lady Mary Lowther—very possibly Miss Grant; you know she goes about with old Mrs. Grant in a yellow coach—but there are so many yellow coaches—the arms or the livery would settle the point at once." These words, *the arms and the livery would settle the point at once*, she repeated to herself perpetually, though without annexing any ideas to the words. In short, she was very feverish all night; and in the morning, though she endeavoured to rise, she was obliged to lie down again. She was confined to her bed for about a week: Lady Bradstone sent for the best physicians; and the young ladies, in the intervals of dressing and going out, whenever they could remember it, came into Miss Turnbull's room to "hope she found her-

self better." It was obvious to her, that no one person in the house cared a straw about her, and she was oppressed with the sense of being an incumbrance to the whole family. Whilst she was alone, she formed many projects for her future life, which she resolved to execute as soon as she should recover. She determined immediately to go down to her own house in the country, and to write to Ellen a recantation of all her fine lady errours. She composed whilst she lay on her feverish pillow, twenty letters to her former friend, each of them more eloquent and magnanimous than the other: but in proportion as her fever left her, the activity of her imagination abated, and with it her eloquence and magnanimity. Her mind naturally weak, and now enfeebled by disease, became quite passive, and received and yielded to the impressions made by external circumstances. New trains of ideas, perfectly different from those which had occupied her mind during her fever, and in the days preceding

her illness, were excited during her convalescence. She lay listening to, or rather hearing, the conversation of the young Lady Bradstones. They used to come into her room at night, and stay for some time whilst they had their hair curled, and talked over the events of the day—whom they had met—what dresses they had worn—what matches were on the tapis, &c. They happened one night to amuse themselves with reading an old newspaper, in which they came to an account of a splendid masquerade, which had been given the preceding winter in London by a rich heiress.

"Lord! what charming entertainments Miss Turnbull might give if she pleased! Why, do you know, she is richer than this woman," whispered Lady Bab; "and she is of age now; you know. If I was she, I'm sure I'd have a house of my own, and the finest I could get in London. Now such a house as my aunt Pierrepoint's—and servants—and car-

riages—and I would make myself of some consequence."

This speech was not lost upon our heroine; and the whisper in which it was spoken increased its effect. The next day, as Lady Bab was sitting at the foot of Almeria's bed, she asked for a description of "my aunt Pierrepoint's house." It was given to her *con amore*, and a character of "my aunt Pierrepoint" was added gratis. "She is the most charming amiable woman in the world—quite a different sort of person from mamma. She has lived all her life about court, and she is connected with all the great people, and a prodigious favourite at court—and she is of such consequence!—You cannot imagine of what consequence she is!"

Lady Gabriella then continued the conversation, by telling Miss Turnbull a great secret, that her aunt Pierrepoint and her mother were not on the best terms in the world; "for mamma's so violent, you know, about politics, and quite on a contrary side to my aunt.

Mamma never goes to court; and between you and I, they say she would not be received. But now that is a shocking thing for us, for of what use is it to me, for instance, that I can dance so tolerable a minuet, if I cannot dance at court. But the most provoking part of the business is, that mamma won't let my aunt Pierrepoint present us. Why, when she cannot or will not go to the drawing room herself, what could be more proper, you know, than to let us be presented by Lady Pierrepoint—-Lady Pierrepoint, you know, who is such a prodigious favourite, and knows every thing in the world that's proper at court, and every where: it really is monstrous of mamma! Now, if you were in our places, should not you be quite provoked? By the by, you never were presented at court yourself, were you?"

"Never," said Almeria, with a sudden feeling of mortification.

"No, you could not—of course you could not, living with mamma as you do;

for I am sure she would quarrel with an angel for just only talking of going to court. Lord! if I was as rich as you, what beautiful birthnight dresses I would have!"

These and similar conversations wrought powerfully upon the weak mind of our poor heroine. She rose from her bed after her illness, wondering what had become of her passion for Frederick Elmour: certainly she was now able to console herself for his loss, by the hopes of being presented at court, and of being dressed with uncommon splendour. She was surprised at this change in her own mind, but she justified it to herself by the reflection, that it would show an unbecoming want of spirit to retain any remains of regard for one who had treated her with so much coldness and indifference, and who in all probability was attached to another woman. Pride and resentment succeeded to tenderness; and she resolved to show Frederick and Ellen, that she could be happy her own way.

It is remarkable that her friendship for the sister always increased or decreased with her love for her brother. Ambition, as it has often been observed, is a passion that frequently succeeds to love, though love seldom follows ambition. Almeria, who had now recovered her strength, was one morning sitting in her own room meditating arrangements for the next winter's campaign, when she was roused by the vôices of Lady Bab and Lady Kitty at her room door,

"Miss Turnbull! Miss Turnbull! come! come!— Here's the King and Queen and all the royal family, and my aunt Pierrepoint—come quick to our dressing-room windows, or they will be out of sight."

The fair hoydens seized her between them, and dragged her away.

"Mamma says it's horridly vulgar to run to the windows, but never mind that —There's my aunt Pierrepoint's coach —Is not it handsome?—O every thing

about her is so handsome!—you know she has lived all her life at court."

The eulogiums of these young ladies, and the sight of Lady Pierrepoint's entry into Cheltenham in the wake of royalty, and the huzzas of the mob, and the curiosity of all ranks who crowded the public walks in the evening, to see the illustrious guests, contributed to raise our heroine's enthusiasm. She was rather surprised afterwards to observe, that Lady Pierrepoint passed her sister and nieces, on the public walk, without taking the slightest notice of them; her head was turned indeed quite another way when she passed, and she was in smiling conversation with one of her own party.

Lady Gabriella whispered, "My aunt Pierrepoint cannot *know* us now, because we are with mamma."

Miss Turnbull now, for the first time, saw Lady Bradstone in a situation in which she was neglected; this served to accelerate the decline and fall of her ladyship's power over her mind. She

began to consider her not as a person by whom she had been brought into notice in the circles of fashion, but as one by whom she was prevented from rising to a higher orbit. Lady Bradstone went to see her sister the day after her arrival, but she was *not at home.* Some days afterwards Lady Pierrepoint returned her visit: she came in a sedan chair, because she did not wish that her carriage should be seen standing at Lady Bradstone's door. "It was incumbent upon her to take every possible precaution, to prevent the suspicion of her being biassed by sisterly affection: her sister and she were unfortunately of such different opinions in politics, and her sister's politics were so much disapproved where Lady Pierrepoint most wished for approbation, that she could not, consistently with her principles or interest, countenance them, by appearing in public with one so obnoxious."

Miss Turnbull observed, with the most minute attention, every word and gesture of Lady Pierrepoint. At first view, her

ladyship appeared all smiling ease and affability; but in all her motions, even in those of her face, there was something that resembled a puppet—her very smiles, and the turns of her eyes, seemed to be governed by unseen wires. Upon still closer observation, however, there was reason to suspect, that this puppet might be regulated by a mind within, of some sort or other; for it could not only answer questions by a voice of its own, and apparently without being prompted, but moreover it seemed to hesitate, and to take time for thought, before it hazarded any reply. Lady Pierrepoint spoke always as if she thought her words would be repeated, and must *lead to consequences;* and there was an air of vast circumspection and mystery about her, which appeared sublime or ridiculous according to the light in which it was considered. To our heroine it appeared sublime.

Her ladyship's conversation, if a set of unmeaning phrases be deserving of that name, at length turned upon the concern

she felt, that it had not been in her power to procure an increase of pension for a certain Mrs. Vickars; "Such a respectable character! — the widow of a distant relation of the Pierrepoints. There was no probability, after all the interest and influence she had used," she said, "that Mrs. Vickars could ever be gratified in the line she had attempted; that therefore it was her ladyship's advice to her to look out for some situation of an eligible description, which might relieve her from the distressing apprehension of appearing burdensome or importunate."

As well as her ladyship's meaning could be made out, cleared from the superfluity of words with which it was covered, she wished to get rid of this poor widow, and to fasten her as an humble companion upon any body who would be troubled with *such a respectable character!* Miss Turnbull foresaw the possibility of obliging her ladyship by means of Mrs. Vickars; for as she proposed to

purchase a house in town, it would be convenient to her to have some companion; and this lady, who was of a certain age, and who had always lived in the best company, would be well suited to serve as her chaperon. To do our heroine justice, considering that she was unpractised in manœuvring with court ladies, she conducted her scheme with a degree of address worthy of her object. Through the medium of Lady Bab and Lady Gabriella, she opened a correspondence with Lady Pierrepoint. Mrs. Vickars was introduced to Miss Turnbull—liked her prodigiously; and Lady Pierrepoint was most happy in the prospect of her relation's being so eligibly situate. In proportion as Miss Turnbull advanced in the good graces of Lady Pierrepoint, she receded from Lady Bradstone. This lady's indignation, which had been excited against Almeria by her not siding with her against her daughters, now rose to the highest pitch, when she perceived what was going on. No crime could in

her eyes be greater than that of seceding from her party. Her violence in party matters was heightened by the desire to contrast herself with her sister Pierrepoint's courtly policy. Lady Bradstone, all the time, knew and cared very little about politics, except so far as they afforded her opportunities for the display of spirit and eloquence. She had a fine flow of words, and loved to engage in argument, especially as she had been often told by gentlemen, that her enthusiasm became her extremely, and that, even if a man could resist the force of her arguments, he must yield to the fire of her eyes. It happened that Miss Turnbull was present one day, when Lady Bradstone had been unusually warm in a political argument, and Lady Pierrepoint as cool and guarded as her sister was eager. Almeria was appealed to, and gave judgement in favour of Lady Pierrepoint, who happened to be in the right. Regardless of right or wrong, Lady Bradstone became more and more

vehement, whilst Lady Pierrepoint sat in all the composed superiority of silence, maintaining the most edifying meekness of countenance imaginable, as if it were incumbent on her to be, or at least to seem, penitent for a sister's perversity. She sighed deeply when the *tirade* was finished, and fixed her eyes upon her beautiful niece Gabriella. Lady Gabriella immediately filled up the pause by declaring, that she knew nothing of politics, and hoped she never should, for that she did not know of what use they were to women, except to prevent them from going to court.

Lady Bradstone expressed high indignation at perceiving, that her daughters thought more of dancing a minuet at a birth-night ball, than of the good of the nation.

Mrs. Vickars, who was present, now interposed a word as mediatrix, observing, that it was natural for the young ladies at their age; and Miss Turnbull, catching or imitating something of the tone

of Lady Pierrepoint, ventured to add, that "It was a pity that Lady Bradstone's daughters did not enjoy all the advantages of their high rank, and that she really wished Lady Bradstone could be prevailed upon to enter into conciliatory measures."

On hearing this speech, Lady Bradstone, no longer able to restrain her anger within the bounds of politeness, exclaimed:—

"I am not surprised at receiving such advice from you, Miss Turnbull; but I own I am astonished at hearing such sentiments from my daughters. High sentiments are to be expected from high birth."

How Lady Bradstone contrived to make her aristocratic pride of birth agree with her democratic principles, it may be difficult to explain; but fortunately the idea of preserving consistency never disturbed her self-complacency. Besides, there are so many examples, to keep her ladyship in countenance,

of persons who live as royalists and talk as republicans.

Almeria could not brook the affront implied by Lady Bradstone's last speech; and matters were now brought to a crisis; she resolved not to remain longer in a house, where she was exposed to such insults. She was of "age, and, thank Heaven! independent."

Lady Bradstone made no opposition to her determination; but congratulated her upon the prospect of becoming independent.

"I agree with you, Miss Turnbull, in thanking Heaven for making me independent. Independence of mind, of course," added she, "I value above independence of purse."

Whatever vexation our heroine might feel from this speech, and from the perfect indifference with which Lady Bradstone parted from her, was compensated by the belief, that she had by her conduct this evening ingratiated herself with Lady Pierrepoint. She was confirmed in this

opinion by Mrs. Vickars, who said that her ladyship afterwards spoke of Miss Turnbull as a very judicious and safe young person, whom she should not scruple to protect. She was even so condescending, as to interest herself about the house in town, which Miss Turnbull talked of purchasing: she knew that a noble friend of hers, who was going on a foreign embassy, had thoughts of parting with his house; and it would certainly suit Miss Turnbull, if she could compass the purchase. Almeria felt herself highly honoured by her ladyship's taking a concern in any of her affairs; and she begged of Mrs. Vickars to say, that "expense was no object to her." She consequently paid a few hundred guineas more than the value of the house, for the honour of Lady Pierrepoint's interference. Her ladyship saw into the weakness of our heroine's character, and determined to make advantage of it. It was a maxim of hers, that there is no person so insignificant, but some advantage may be made by

them; and she had acted upon this principle through life, sometimes so as to excite in the minds of the ignorant a high admiration of her affability.—It is said, that when Lady Pierrepoint was asked why she married, she replied—

"To increase my consequence, and strengthen my connexions."

Perhaps this speech was made for her by some malicious wit; but it is certain, that she never upon any occasion of her life neglected an opportunity of acting upon this principle. She was anxious with this view to have as many dependants as possible; and she well knew, that those who were ambitious of a curtsey from her at the playhouse, or a whisper at the Opera, were as effectually her dependants as the mendicants at her door who are in want of a shilling. The poor may be held in the iron fetters of necessity, but the rich are dragged behind the car of fashion by the golden chains of vanity.

The summer in the life of a fine lady is

a season comparatively of so little consequence, that the judicious historian may pass over some months of it without their being missed in their records of time. He hastens to the busy and important season of winter.

Our heroine took possession of her magnificent house in town; and Mrs. Vickars was established as *arbitratix elegantiarum.*

This lady deemed herself a judge in the last appeal of every thing that became a person of fashion; and her claim to infallibility upon these points was established by her being fourth cousin to Lady Pierrepoint. Almeria soon discovered in her companion an inordinate love of power, and an irritability of temper, which misfortunes and ill health had increased to such a degree, that it required more than the patience of a female Job to live with her upon good terms. Martyrs in the cause of vanity certainly exhibit wonderful, if not admirable, fortitude in the midst of the absurd and extrava-

gant torments which they inflict upon themselves. Our heroine endured for a whole season, without any outward complaint, but with many an inward groan, the penance which she had imposed upon herself: the extent of it can be comprehended only by those, who have been doomed to live with a thoroughly ill-tempered woman. The reward was surely proportioned to the sufferings. Miss Turnbull received a smile, or a nod, or something like a curtsey from Lady Pierrepoint, whenever she met her in public; her ladyship's cards were occasionally left at the Yorkshire heiress's door; and she sometimes honoured Miss Turnbull's crowded rooms, by crowding them still more with her august presence. There was further reason to hope, that her ladyship might be induced to present Almeria at court before the next birth-day. All these advantages were to be attributed to Mrs. Vickars, for she was the connecting link between two beings of inferior and superior order. We forbear to

describe, or even to enumerate, the variety of balls, suppers, dinners, déjeûnés, galas, and masquerades, which Miss Turnbull gave to the fashionable world during this winter. The generous public forget these things the week after they are over; and the consequence they bestow endures no longer than the track of a triumphal chariot.

Our heroine was never fully convinced of this truth, till it was confirmed by her own experience. She found it necessary continually to renew her expensive efforts, to keep herself alive in the memory of her great acquaintance. Towards the time when she expected to be presented at court by Lady Pierrepoint, a sudden coolness was apparent in her ladyship's manner; and one morning Almeria was surprised by a note from her, regretting in the most polite but positive terms, that it would be absolutely out of her power to have the honour of presenting Miss Turnbull at St. James's. In the utmost consternation, Almeria flew for an

explanation to Mrs. Vickars. Mrs. Vickars was in a desperate fit of *the sullen*, which had lasted now upwards of eight and forty hours, ever since her advice had not been taken about the placing of certain bronze figures, with antique lamps in their hands, upon the great staircase. It was necessary to bring the lady into a good humour in the first place by yielding to her uncontrolled dominion over the *candelabras*. This point being settled, and an unqualified submission in all matters of taste, past, present, or to come, declared or implied on the part of our heroine, Mrs. Vickars on her part promised to set out immediately on an embassy to Lady Pierrepoint, to discover the cause of the present discontent. After making sundry ineffectual attempts to see her noble relation, she was at last admitted, and after one hour's private audience, she returned to the anxious Almeria with a countenance lengthened to the utmost stretch of melancholy significance.

"What *is* the matter, Mrs. Vickars?"

It was long before this question was answered; but after many friendly lamentations, Mrs. Vickars could not help observing—that Miss Turnbull had nobody to blame in this business but herself. This, or any thing else, she was willing to admit, to get at the point.—“ But what have I done?—I dare say it is as you say, all my own fault—but tell me how?”

“ How!—Can you, my dearest Miss Turnbull, forget that you did the most imprudent and really unaccountable thing, that ever woman did—Lady Pierrepoint *had it* from Stock the banker. Now you must be certainly conscious to what I allude.”

Almeria still looked innocent, till Mrs. Vickars produced the book dedicated to Lady Bradstone; for twelve copies of which Miss Turnbull had subscribed. Her name was printed among the list of subscribers, and there was no palliating the fact. When her companion saw, that she was quite overwhelmed with the sense of this misfortune, she began to hint,

that though the evil was great, it was not without remedy; that in her own private opinion, Lady Pierrepoint might have passed over the thing, if she had not heard it at a most unlucky moment. The provoking banker mentioned it to her ladyship just after he had disappointed her of certain monies, for which she was negociating. From her situation and means of obtaining secret and early intelligence, she had it frequently in her power, to make money by selling in or out of the stocks. Such an opportunity at present occurred; and "it was a great pity," Mrs. Vickars observed, "that the want of a little ready money should preclude her from the possibility of profiting by her situation." Miss Turnbull, who was not deficient in quickness of comprehension, upon this hint immediately said, "that her ladyship might command some thousands, which she had in Mr. Stock's bank." Lady Pierrepoint the next day found, that it would be best to hush up the affair of the subscription to the fatal

pamphlet. She said, "that she had with infinite satisfaction ascertained, that the thing had not been noticed in the quarter where she feared it would have created an insuperable prejudice—that there were other Turnbulls, as she was happy to understand, in the world, beside Mrs. Vickar's friend; and that as, in the list of subscribers, she was mentioned only as *Miss* Turnbull, not as Almeria Turnbull, all was safe, and nobody would suspect that a lady presented at court by my Lady Pierrepoint could be the same person, that subscribed to a book of such a description."

This affair being adjusted, the league was tacitly formed between interest and vanity. Miss Turnbull was presented at court by Lady Pierrepoint, and her ladyship bought into the stocks with the Yorkshire heiress's money. The gratification of Almeria's ambition, however, did not complete her happiness. When she was at the summit of the Alps of fashion, she saw how little was to be seen.

Though she liked to have it to say, that she was a great deal with Lady Pierrepoint, yet the time always passed most heavily in her company; nor was the inferiority of this lady's understanding compensated by an affectionate heart. Her smoothly polished exterior prevented all possibility of obtaining any hold over her. She had the art at once to seem to be intimate with people, and to keep them at the greatest distance; as, in certain optical deceptions, an object which appears close to us eludes our hand, if we attempt to grasp it. Almeria felt the want of that species of unreserved confidence and friendship, which she had formerly enjoyed with Ellen. In judging of what will make us happy, we are apt to leave time out of the account; and this leads to most important errours. For a short period we may be amused or gratified by what will fatigue and disgust us if long continued. The first winter that she spent in dissipation, she was amused; but winter after winter passed: and the recurrence

of the same public diversions, and the same faces, and the same commonplace conversation, wearied instead of interesting her. But as the pleasure of novelty declined, the power of habit increased; and she continued the same course of life for six years—six long years! against both her judgement and her feelings, the absolute slave of an imaginary necessity. —Thus the silly chicken remains prisoner in a circle of chalk: even when the hand by which it was held down is removed, it feels an imaginary pressure, from which it dares not even attempt to escape.

Almeria, however, was now arrived at an age, when she could no longer, with any propriety, be called a chicken: she was seven and twenty; and the effect of keeping late hours, and the continual petty irritations to which she had been subject, were sufficiently visible in her countenance. She looked in a morning so faded and haggard, that any one, not used to the *wear and tear* of fashionable faces, would have guessed Almeria's age to be

seven and thirty instead of seven and twenty. During her six campaigns in London, she or her fortune had made many conquests; but none of her London captives had ever obtained any power over her affections, and her ambition could not decide upon the pretensions of her several suitors. Lady Pierrepoint, who was her prime adviser, had an interest in keeping her unmarried; because during this time her ladyship employed most advantageously certain monies, which she had borrowed from our heiress. This female politician made some objection to every proposal, continually repeating, that Miss Turnbull might do better—that she might look higher—that with her pretensions, there could be no doubt that she would have variety of advantageous offers—and that her *play* should be to raise her value by rejecting, without hesitation, all pretenders but those of the first distinction. Lady Pierrepoint, who usually spoke with all the ambiguity of an oracle, seemed on this subject more than usually mysterious.

She dropped half sentences, then checked herself, hinted that she was not at liberty to speak out; but that she had her own private reasons for advising her friend Miss Turnbull not to be precipitate in her choice. Her ladyship's looks said more than her words, and Almeria interpreted them precisely as she wished. There was a certain marquis, whom she sometimes met at Lady Pierrepoint's and whom she would have been pleased to meet more frequently. He was neither young, nor handsome, nor witty, nor wise. What was he then?—He was a marquis — and is not that enough?—Almeria saw, that he was looked up to as a person of great influence and importance, and she now had the habit of trusting to the eyes and ears of others. She now considered what people were *thought of*, not what they really were; and according to this mode of estimation she could not fail to form a high opinion of this exalted personage. He paid her distinguished, but not decisive attention; and

perhaps the uncertainty, in which she was kept as to his views, increased her interest upon the subject. There was always some obstacle, which seemed to prevent him from declaring himself; at one time he was suddenly obliged to go ambassador to some foreign court; he went and staid a year; at his return he was immersed in politics, and deplored his hard fate in terms, which Almeria thought it was impossible not to construe favourably to her wishes. She thought she was upon the point of becoming a marchioness, when his lordship was again sent into what he called banishment. Lady Pierrepoint had constantly letters from him, however; passages from which she from time to time read to Almeria, in whose weak mind this kept alive an indistinct hope, for which she had no rational foundation. She was confirmed in her belief, that the marquis had serious thoughts of her, by the opinion of Mrs. Vickars, who she thought was in the secret, and who certainly would not speak

decidedly without sufficient reason. Indeed, nothing but the pleasure she received from Mrs. Vickars's favourable prognostics upon this subject could have in any degree balanced the pain she daily endured from this lady's fretful temper. Almeria submitted to her domineering humour, and continued to propitiate her with petty sacrifices, more from fear than love—from fear, that her adverse influence might be fatal to her present scheme of aggrandisement. Weak minds are subject to this apprehension of control from secret causes utterly inadequate to their supposed effects; and thus they put their destiny into the hands of persons, who could not otherwise obtain influence over their fate.

The time at length arrived when our heroine was to be confirmed in her expectations, or wakened from her state of self-delusion. The marquis returned from abroad, and Lady Pierrepoint wrote a note more mysteriously worded than usual, signifying, that she "wished to

have a conference with Miss Turnbull on a subject of some importance; and begged to know at what hour in the morning she might be secure of the pleasure of finding her at home." Almeria named her hour, and waited for its arrival with no small impatience. Lady Pierrepoint's thundering knock at the door was heard; her ladyship was shown up stairs; and she entered the room with a countenance, that seemed to promise well. She preluded with many flattering phrases—declared, that ever since she had been first acquainted with Miss Turnbull at Cheltenham, she had always considered her with sentiments of esteem, of which she had since given indeed the most convincing proofs, by accepting of obligations from her.

"Obligations!" exclaimed Almeria, with an air of polite astonishment.

"Yes, my dear Miss Turnbull," continued her ladyship, with still more polite humility, "I am under obligations to you assuredly. Things of a pecuniary nature

ought not to be named, I confess, in the same sentence with friendship, yet for the sake of one's family is it, whilst we remain in this world, the duty of every one to pay a certain degree of attention to such points; and a person, who has, like me, advantages of situation and connexions, would not be justifiable in neglecting, under due limitations, to make use of them."

Miss Turnbull readily assented to these guarded truisms, but wondered to what all this was to lead.

"The money which you have had the goodness to trust in my hands," continued her ladyship, "has, without in the least impoverishing, or I hope *inconveniencing* you, been of the most material advantage to me."

Almeria comprehended that her ladyship referred to her speculations in the stocks, and she congratulated her upon her success; and added assurances, that for her own part she had not been in the slightest degree *inconvenienced*. Whilst

Miss Turnbull uttered these assurances, however, she was not sorry to see Lady Pierrepoint take out of her pocket-book bank notes to the amount of her debt; for, in plain truth, the interest of this loan had never been punctually paid; and Almeria had often regretted, that she had placed so much of her fortune out of her own power.—"Let me now return these to you with a thousand thanks," said her ladyship. "Indeed, my niece Gabriella has more reason even than I have to thank you; for you must know, my dear Miss Turnbull, that all my speculations have been for her. From the time that she came to live with me, I was determined that she should be properly established; and you must be sensible that, for a young lady's establishment in our days, money is as essential as beauty. La belle Gabrielle is now provided for as she ought to be, and of course the consequence will be a suitable alliance."—Miss Turnbull expressed her satisfaction at finding, that her money had been instrumental in attaining so

happy a purpose, and presumed to ask if her ladyship had any immediate alliance in view.

"It is a secret as yet; but I have no secrets for you, my dear Miss Turnbull: indeed, I came here this morning by our dear Gabriella's particular desire to communicate it to you. I flatter myself you will approve of her choice—our favourite marquis."

Almeria was so much astonished and shocked by these words, that she turned as pale as if she was going to faint.—"Our favourite marquis!" she repeated in a faltering voice; "I thought——"

The fear of becoming ridiculous restrained her anger, and she paused.—"You thought perhaps," resumed the perfectly-composed Lady Pierrepoint, "you thought perhaps, my dear, that there was too great a disparity of age between Gabriella and the marquis."

"O no."

"Why that is an objection, I confess; at least it would be to some young ladies:

but as Gabriella is satisfied, we may wave that."

"O yes, certainly."

"One cannot help being interested for him; he is such a respectable character—and so much in love!—It would really surprise you, my dear, for you know he was a man, one would have imagined, so much immersed in politics—I protest I never had a suspicion of his having a thought of Gabriella, till the proposal was absolutely made."

"I am sure *I* never suspected the marquis's attachment to Lady Gabriella," said Miss Turnbull—"on the contrary."

"On the contrary," pursued Lady Pierrepoint, "he paid her always, as I remember, less attention than to twenty others, who were indifferent to him."

The struggle was still violent in our heroine's mind between rage and the dread of exposing herself to ridicule: Lady Pierrepoint saw this, and coolly held her in this dilemma.

"Now," continued her ladyship, "men

are such unaccountable creatures, one never can understand them. Do you know, my dear Miss Turnbull, I had, till his lordship explained himself unequivocally to me, a notion that he was in love with you."

"Really!" said our heroine, forcing a laugh.

"Did your friend Mrs. Vickars never tell you so?"

"Yes, she did—frequently."

"Both of us mistaken, you see, my dear.—Mortifying! to find one's judgement so fallible. I tell the marquis, he might absolutely have been privately married to Gabriella without my finding him out—it is so easy, now the easiest thing in the world, to impose upon me.—Well, I must bid you adieu for the present, my dear Miss Turnbull—you may imagine I have a world of business on my hands."

With the utmost appearance of cordiality Lady Pierrepoint shook our heroine's receding hand, and, without seem-

ing to notice the painful emotions visible in Almeria's countenance, departed smiling, and perfectly composed.

The moment that her ladyship had left the room, our heroine retired to her own apartment, and hastily bolted the door to prevent the intrusion of Mrs. Vickars, whose curiosity and condolence, whether real or affected, she was not in a humour to endure. She walked up and down the room in great agitation, by turns angry with Lady Pierrepoint, with the marquis, with Lady Gabriella, with Mrs. Vickars, and with herself. After her anger had spent itself, the sorrowful certainty that it was unavailing remained; the disappointment was irremediable, and her mortification was the more poignant, because she had no human being to sympathize in her feelings; no one to whom she could complain.

"So this is fashionable friendship," said she to herself. "This is the end of all Lady Pierrepoint's and Lady Gabri-

ella's professions of regard for me!—Fool that I have been, to become their dupe!—With my eyes open, I saw nothing that was going forward, though now I can recollect a thousand and a thousand circumstances, by which I might have been undeceived. But I trusted implicitly,—idiot that I was!—to the friendship of this treacherous unfeeling courtier. Once I had a friend, to whom I might trust implicitly—I never, never shall find her equal."

A transient recollection of former times crossed her mind—but those times could not be recalled; and the present pressed upon her most forcibly. Frustrated in all her ambitious schemes, she was sensible, that all that now remained for her was to conceal her diappointment; and to avoid the contempt to which she would be exposed in the world, if it were whispered, that Miss Turnbull had fancied that the Marquis of ——— was in love with her, whilst he was all the while paying his addresses to Lady Gabriella

Bradstone. This powerful fear of ridicule conquered, or suppressed, all other feelings. With all the resolution she could assume, Almeria went to Mrs. Vickars, and congratulated her upon the happy event, which was soon likely to take place in her family: she even constrained herself so far, as, without expressing either suspicion or resentment, to hear her companion disclaim all knowledge of the affair, and declare, that she had that morning, for the first time, heard of it from Lady Pierrepoint, with a degree of astonishment, from which she had not yet recovered.

In a few weeks afterwards Lady Gabriella's marriage took place. Our heroine's mortification was much increased by the splendour in which the bride appeared, and by the great share of the public attention which the fair marchioness seemed for some days to engross. Miss Turnbull was weary of hearing the praises of her equipages and dress; and the dissimulation she was continually

obliged to practice towards Mrs. Vickars became intolerable. Nothing but a pretext for quarrelling with this lady was wanting to Almeria, and nothing but an excuse for leaving Almeria was now desired by Mrs. Vickars, who had received an invitation from the marchioness, which she was impatient to accept. The ladies one morning after breakfast fell into a dispute upon the comparative merits of blue and green. It was not to all appearance a very dangerous subject, but in certain situations every subject becomes dangerous.

"This ribband is a beautiful blue," said Miss Turnbull.

"I confess I do not think so," said Mrs. Vickars; "it is a very unbecoming shade of blue."

"Unbecoming!—I have been told by twenty people, that it is remarkably becoming to me. Miss Ingoldsby told me yesterday, that she never saw so beautiful a blue."

"Miss Ingoldsby's taste is not infalli-

ble, I imagine," said Mrs. Vickars with a contemptuous smile.

"It may not be infallible," replied our heroine, "but it is at least as much to be relied upon as other people's."

"I am sure I do not pretend to compare my taste to Miss Ingoldsby's; but I may be permitted to have an opinion of my own, I hope: and in my opinion it is a frightful blue, and shockingly unbecoming. And at all events I like green infinitely better than blue; and I beseech you, Miss Turnbull, not to wear this hideous ribband."

"I am sure I don't pretend to set my taste in competition with Mrs. Vickars, but I must confess I cannot think this a frightful blue, or shockingly unbecoming; nor can I agree with any body in preferring green to blue; and for once I shall take the liberty of following my own fancy."

"For once!—I am sorry I ever presumed to offer an opinion upon this or any other subject to Miss Turnbull—I

shall be more cautious in future; but I candidly own I did think I might prefer green to blue without giving offence."

"It gives me no offence, I assure you, Mrs. Vickars, that you should prefer green to blue; I am not so ridiculous. But people who cannot bear to be contradicted themselves, are always apt to fancy, that others have the same strange sort of domineering temper."

"People who can bear nothing but flattery, Miss Turnbull, should have such a friend as Miss Ingoldsby, who would swear that blue is green, and black white, I make no doubt," said Mrs. Vickars; "for my part I am sorry I cannot get rid of my troublesome sincerity."

"Sincerity! Sincerity!—To do you justice, Mrs. Vickars, whatever I may have felt about trifles, in affairs of importance I have never found your *sincerity* troublesome."

The ironical accent upon the word *sincerity* sufficiently marked Miss Turnbull's meaning.

The irritable temper of Mrs. Vickars put it out of her power to act a part with that "exquisite dissimulation," for which some of her sex have been celebrated by the judicious Davila. Thrown off her guard by the last sarcastic insinuation, Mrs. Vickars burst into an angry defence of her own sincerity with respect to the affair of the marquis and Lady Gabriella. Almeria observed, that this "defence was quite unnecessary, as she had not made any accusation; and these apologies could be prompted only by Mrs. Vickars's own *tenderness* of conscience." —Mrs. Vickars replied with increasing acrimony. She said, that her "conduct needed no apologies, and that she should not stoop to make any, to sooth the disappointed ambition of any person whatever."— Reproach succeeded reproach—sarcasm produced sarcasm—till at last Mrs. Vickars declared, that after what had passed, it was impossible she should remain another day in Miss Turnbull's house.—This declaration was

heard by Almeria with undisguised satisfaction. The next day Mrs. Vickars accepted of an invitation from the marchioness; and our heroine afterwards protested, that she was as much rejoiced to be freed from the encumbrance of such a companion, as Sindbad the sailor was to get rid of the old man of the sea, who fastened himself upon his shoulders with such remorseless tenacity. She resolved to be more cautious in the choice of her next companion. There were many candidates for the honour of supplying the place of Mrs. Vickars; amongst these was Mrs. Ingoldsby, a lady who was perfect mistress of the whole art of flattery, by means of which she had so far ingratiated herself with Miss Turnbull, that she felt secure of a preference over all competitors. Almeria had indeed almost decided in her favour, when she received a note from a Mrs. Wynne, an old lady with whom she had formerly been acquainted in Yorkshire, and who, being just come to town, was eager to renew

her intimacy with Miss Turnbull. She was a woman of an excellent heart, and absolutely incapable of suspecting that others could be less frank or friendly than herself. She was sometimes led into mistakes by this undistinguishing benevolence, for she imagined that all which appeared wrong would prove right, if properly understood; that there must be some good reason for every thing that seemed to be bad; that every instance of unkindness or insolence was undesigned; and that every quarrel was only a misunderstanding.—Possessed by this good-natured kind of wrong-headedness, she frequently did the most provoking, by way of doing the most obliging, things imaginable.

Upon this principle she would place contending parties by surprise in the very situation, which of all others they most wished to avoid, and then gave the signal for a pitched battle, by begging the enemies would shake hands with one another. Now she had heard it re-

ported in Yorkshire, that there was some coolness between the Elmours and Miss Turnbull, but she was morally certain there could be no truth in this report, for a variety of the very best reasons in the world.

"In the first place," argued Mrs. Wynne, "to my certain knowledge, Miss Turnbull was, from her infancy, always the greatest favourite at Elmour Grove, the pupil of the good old gentleman, and the intimate friend of the daughter. During that odd Turnbull's life-time, Almeria was always with Miss Ellen Elmour, who treated her quite like a sister. I am sure I remember, as if it was yesterday, her introducing Miss Turnbull to me, and the affectionate way in which she spoke of her—and I particularly recollect hearing Almeria Turnbull, amongst other grateful things, say, that she should wish to live and die with her friends at Elmour Grove. Then she had stronger reasons afterwards for being attached to them—you know it was Mr.

Frederick Elmour who gained her large fortune for her. I was in the court-house in York the very day the cause was decided, and I never heard a man speak with more energy and eloquence than Frederick Elmour did in her defence. It was plain, indeed, that the eloquence came from his heart—as to the law part of the business, I know my nephew, who understands those things, said it was a very nice question, and that if her cause had not been managed as ably as it was, she would not have gained her fortune. Now of course this was a thing that never could be forgotten. I own, I expected that there would have been a match between Miss Turnbull and Mr. Elmour; but Sir Thomas Stock, her guardian, took her away from us, and Mr. Elmour fell in love with another lady. But all this time Miss Turnbull has never married, though she has been so much in the great world, and from her large fortune must have had so many offers. I heard it said yesterday, that she had refused

Sir Thomas Stock's eldest son, and my Lord Bradstone, and some others; now it is plain she would not marry merely for money or title. My nephew, who is so amiable and sensible, is just the man for her, and he had used to admire her very much in former times, when he met her at Elmour Grove." Mrs. Wynne hinted her wishes to her nephew, but he seemed not much inclined towards Miss Turnbull, "because," said he, "though Frederick and his sister never uttered a syllable to her disadvantage, I cannot, from circumstances, help imagining, that she has not behaved well to them; and besides, after five or six years spent in the great world, and in all the dissipation in which she has lived, her disposition cannot probably be the same as it was when I knew her in the country."

Mrs. Wynne could not, with her good-natured eyes, see the force of any of these objections, and she was determined to convince her nephew of their futility.

With this view, she formed a scheme, which was to be kept a profound secret from the parties concerned, till the moment when it should be ripe for execution. She heard, that Miss Turnbull was in want of a companion; and she knew, that Mrs. Henry Elmour, a very amiable young widow, distantly related to the Elmour family, and who had formerly been a friend of Almeria's, was at this moment in great distress. She had no doubt that Miss Turnbull would be delighted with an opportunity of serving any one connected with a family, to whom she had such obligations. Mrs. Wynne fancied, that this would be the finest occasion imaginable to prove to her nephew, that, notwithstanding Almeria had lately lived so much in the fashionable world, she had the same grateful heart as formerly.

Eager to come to this demonstration, Mrs. Wynne wrote immediately to the distressed widow, begging her to come to town with all possible expedition;

"for I have found, or at least I am morally sure of finding, the most charming situation your heart can desire. I say no more, that I may not deprive you of the pleasure of the surprise."

The same day that she sent this letter to the post, she dispatched the following note to Almeria:

"MY DEAR MISS TURNBULL,

I am too well persuaded of the goodness of your heart to fear, that you should think my present interference impertinent. We used to be very good friends in Yorkshire, and I am sure shall be just the same in London; therefore, I write without ceremony, as friends should. I called upon you twice, but found you were unluckily not at home. Now I have a matter very near my heart to speak to you about, that perhaps will turn out as much to your satisfaction as to mine. I cannot express myself so well as I could wish in writing, but am sure you will not repent your kindness,

if you will do us the honour of dining with us in a family way on Friday next; and in the mean time, let me beg you will not decide your choice of a companion. I cannot be more explicit, lest (as I have said once before to day) I should deprive you of the pleasure of the surprise. Dear Madam, forgive this freedom in one who most sincerely wishes you well (as Friday will prove). My nephew, Henry Wynne (whom you may remember a great admirer of yours), desires his best respects; and with every good wish I remain,

Dear Miss Turnbull's
Affectionate humble servant,
M. WYNNE."

This letter at first surprised our heroine, and afterwards afforded subject for much ridicule to Mrs. Ingoldsby, to whom Almeria showed it. She laughed at the odd freedom of the Yorkshire dame, at the old fashioned plainness of the style—(parenthesis within parenthe-

sis)—at last, concluding with respects and best wishes, and *remaining* dear Miss Turnbull's humble servant. She opined, however, upon the third perusal of the letter, that Mrs. Wynne was anxious to present her nephew to Miss Turnbull, and that this was the real meaning of her curious note—that probably she wished to surprise her with the sight of some Yorkshire damsel, who had formed the reasonable expectation, that because Miss Turnbull had done her the honour to notice her ages ago in the country, she was to be her companion in town. Mrs. Ingoldsby further observed, that Mrs. Wynne, though she had not practised at court, was no bad politician in thus attempting to recommend a companion to Miss Turnbull, who would of course be entirely in her nephew's interests. Almeria's vanity was indirectly flattered by these insinuations, which tended to prove her vast consequence, in being thus the object of plots and counterplots; and she

the more readily believed this, from the experience she had had of Lady Pierrepoint's manœuvres.—"It is really a dreadful thing," said she, "to be a great heiress. One must be so circumspect—so much upon one's guard with all the world. But poor Mrs. Wynne shows her cards so plainly, one must be an idiot not to guess her whole play."

To "mistake reverse of wrong for right," is one of the most common errours in the conduct of life. Our heroine being sensible, that she had been ridiculously credulous in her dealings with Lady Pierrepoint, was now inclined to be preposterously suspicious. She determined with her next admirer to pursue a system diametrically opposite to that which she had followed with the marquis; she had shown him attractive complaisance; she was now prepared to display the repulsive haughtiness becoming the representative of two hundred thousand pounds; she had completely adopted Lady Pierrepoint's maxim, *That a lady*

should marry to increase her consequence and strengthen her connexions. Her former ideas, that love and esteem were necessary to happiness in a union for life, seemed obsolete and romantic; and the good qualities of her admirers, though they were always to be mentioned as the ostensible reasons for her choice, were never in reality to influence her decision.

To stoop at once from a marquis to a private gentleman, would be terrible; yet that private gentleman was worthy of some little consideration, not because he was, as Almeria remembered, a man of excellent sense, temper, and character; but because he had a clear estate of eight thousand pounds a year, and was next heir to an earldom.

Miss Turnbull cannot properly be called a female fortune-hunter, but to coin a new name for our heroine, which may be useful to designate a numerous class of her contemporaries, she was decidedly a female *title-hunter*.

She accepted of the invitation to din-

ner, and, accompanied by a proper supporter in Mrs. Ingoldsby, went to Mrs. Wynne's, dressed in the utmost extravagance of the mode, blazing in all the glory of diamonds, in hopes of striking admiration even unto awe upon the hearts of all beholders. Though she had been expressly invited to a *family party*, she considered that only as an humble country phrase to excuse beforehand any deficiency of magnificence. She had no doubt, that the finest entertainment, and the finest company, Mrs. Wynne could procure or collect would be prepared for her reception. She was somewhat surprised, especially as she came fashionably late, to find in the drawing-room only old Mrs. Wynne, her nephew, and a lady, who from her dress and modest appearance was evidently *nobody*. Miss Turnbull swept by her, though she had a disagreeable recollection of having somewhere seen this figure in a former state of existence. Mrs. Wynne, good soul! did not believe in

wilful blindness, and she therefore said, with provoking simplicity,

"Miss Turnbull, this is your good friend Mrs. Henry Elmour—poor thing! she is sadly altered in her looks since you saw her, a gay rosy lass at Elmour Grove! but though her looks are changed, her heart, I can answer for it, is just the same as ever, and she remembers you with all the affection you could desire. She would not be like any other of her name, indeed, if she did otherwise. The Elmours were all so fond of you!"

The name of Elmour, instead of having that irresistible charm, which Mrs. Wynne expected, over Almeria's heart, produced a directly contrary effect. It recalled many associations, that were painful to her pride; she was vexed to perceive, that obligations and intimacies which she had forgotten, or which she wished to forget, were remembered so obstinately by others. All this passed in her mind whilst Mrs. Wynne was speaking. With a look of ill-humoured sur-

prise, Almeria half rose from her seat, and as Mrs. Henry Elmour was presented to her, uttered some phrases in an unintelligible voice, and then sunk back again on the sofa. Mrs. Wynne made room for the widow between her and Miss Turnbull—Mr. Wynne kept aloof—a dead silence ensued—and Miss Turnbull seeing that in her present position there was nothing else to be done, condescended to hope that all Mrs. Henry Elmour's friends in Yorkshire were well, when she left them. Mrs. Wynne's countenance brightened up, and she now addressed her conversation to Mrs. Ingoldsby, in order to leave the pair, whom she had destined to be friends, at perfect liberty to talk over "old times."

Mrs. Henry Elmour naturally spoke of the happy days which they had spent together at Elmour Grove; but Miss Turnbull was so much occupied in clasping one of her diamond bracelets, that half of what was said to her seemed not to be heard, and the other half to create no in-

terest. She looked up, when she had at length adjusted her bracelet, and with an insipid smile (learned from Lady Pierrepoint) seemed to beg pardon for her fit of absence. The unfortunate Mrs. Elmour recommenced all she had said; but though Miss Turnbull's eyes were at this time directed towards the widow's face, they wandered over her features with such insolent examination, that she way totally abashed. Having gained her point, our heroine now looked round, as the door opened, in expectation of the entrance of some persons who might be worthy of her attention; but lo! it was only a servant, who announced that dinner was served. Miss Turnbull's surprise could be equalled only by her indignation, when she found, that it was literally to a *family party* she was invited.—"Miss Turnbull," said Mrs. Wynne, as they were sitting down to dinner, "I have been much disappointed in not having the company of some friends of yours, who I expected would dine with

us to day; but they will be with us, I hope, to night—they were unluckily engaged to dine with the Duchess of——."

Miss Turnbull vouchsafed to appear interested, when the name of a duchess was mentioned, but her countenance again changed to an expression of almost angry vexation, when Mrs. Wynne explained, that these friends were Mr. and Mrs. Elmour, and Mr. Charles Wynne and his lady. "Miss Ellen Elmour, you know, she was—"—"Very true, I saw her marriage in the papers, I remember, some time ago," replied Miss Turnbull; "a year, if I'm not mistaken."

"Two years ago, madam," said Mrs. Wynne.

"Was it two?—I dare say it might—you know it is *so* impossible to keep a register of deaths and marriages in one's head.—Pray, are you at all acquainted, Mrs. Wynne, with the Duchess of ——? She was always a prodigious friend of the Elmours, as I remember—How is that?—Are they any way related, I wonder?"

"Yes; they are now related by marriage," said Mr. Wynne; "Mrs. Elmour is a niece of the duchess's."

"Indeed!"

"She is a charming woman," said Mrs. Wynne, "so beautiful, and yet so unaffected—so sensible, yet so unassuming."

"Pray," interrupted Mrs. Ingoldsby, "has not her grace converzaziones, or reading parties, or something in that style every week!—She is quite a learned lady, I understand. There was always something odd about her, and I cannot help being afraid of her."

"I assure you," said Mrs. Wymne, "that there is nothing odd or strange about the Duchess of ———. She has always the most agreeable society that London can afford."

Miss Turnbull and Mrs. Ingoldsby interchanged looks of affected contempt—but Mr. Wynne added—

"Her grace has, you know, a taste for literature and for the arts; and the most

celebrated literary characters, as well as those who have distinguished themselves in active life, assemble at her house, where they can enjoy the most agreeable conversation—that in which a knowledge of books and of the world is happily blended."

"And as to being afraid of her grace," resumed Mrs. Wynne, "that is quite impossible; she has such affable, engaging manners. I am sure, even I am not in the least afraid of her."

"But you know," said Miss Turnbull, with a malicious look of mock humility, "there is a difference between you and me—I would not meet her grace for the world, for I am persuaded I should not be able to articulate a syllable in her classical presence—I have not been used to that style of company by any means.—I assure you, I should be, as Mrs. Ingoldsby says, horridly afraid of your witty duchess."

"She has none of the airs of a wit, believe me," said Mrs. Wynne, growing more and more earnest; "and if you

will not believe me, ask your friend Ellen."

"O excuse me, I beseech; I shall ask no questions—I only beg leave to keep myself well, when I am well. The Elmours, who are so clever, and have such merit, and so on, are all vastly better suited to her grace than I am."

No contradiction ensued—our heroine was mortified beyond the power of concealment.

After dinner, when the ladies retired, Mrs. Wynne, though somewhat alarmed and puzzled by Miss Turnbull's behaviour, summoned all the resolution, which benevolence could inspire, and resolved at once to come to the point with our heroine. She flattered herself, that all in Miss Turnbull, that appeared inauspicious to her hopes, was only *her manner*, that sort of manner which people, who live much in high life, catch, and practise, without meaning to give themselves airs, or to humble their neighbours.

Many persons will perhaps think good

Mrs. Wynne almost an idiot; but she was a woman of abilities, and if she did not exert them in discovering with promptitude the follies of others, she enjoyed much happiness in her benevolent scepticism. This evening, however, she was doomed to be absolutely convinced, against her will, that she had formed too favourable an opinion of one of her fellow-creatures.

She was eager to explain herself to Almeria before Ellen and Mr. Frederick Elmour should arrive; she therefore took her aside, and began without any preface:

"My dear Miss Turnbull; here is a charming opportunity for you to do a kind, and generous, and grateful action. —This poor Mrs. Henry Elmour!—She has told you how she has been reduced to distress without any imprudence of hers. Now you could not, I am sure, prove the goodness of your own heart better to your friends (who will be here in half an hour) than by showing kindness to this unfortunate widow. I cannot pre-

sume to say more than, that I think she would make a most agreeable companion to an amiable sensible young lady—and you have not decided your choice, have you?"

"Pardon me, I have decided, beyond a possibility of retracting," replied Miss Turnbull haughtily.

"I am very sorry," said Mrs. Wynne, with an expression of real concern in her countenance, "I have been very imprudent."

"Really I am infinitely distressed, that it is out of my power to oblige her; but the lady who is with me now, Mrs. Ingoldsby, has a prior claim."

Prior claim!—prior to that of the Elmour family! thought Mrs. Wynne.

The decisive manner, in which Miss Turnbull spoke, precluded all further hope.

"Well, I did think it would have been such a pleasure to Miss Turnbull to meet Mrs. Henry Elmour, and all her old friends the Elmours here to day; and I

fancied, that if there had been any little coolness or misunderstanding, it would quite have passed off, and that I should have had the joy of seeing you all shake hands—I thought it would have been such an agreeable surprise to you to see all the Elmour family, and Ellen's charming little girl, and Mr. Frederick Elmour's boy!"

A more disagreeable surprise could scarcely have been imagined for our heroine—she informed Mrs. Wynne coldly, that there was not the slightest quarrel between her and any of the Elmours; and that therefore there was no necessity, or possible occasion, for any shaking of hands or reconciliation scenes; that undoubtedly the style of life she had been thrown into had entirely separated her from her Yorkshire acquaintance; and time had dissolved the sort of intimacy that neighbourhood had created. That she should always, notwithstanding be most particularly happy to meet any of the Elmour family, though, from her

situation, it was a good fortune she had not often enjoyed, nor indeed could in future expect. But that she wished it to be understood, and repeated, that she always in all companies properly acknowledged the obligations she had to Mr. Frederick Elmour as a lawyer. Her cause, she believed, was the first in which he had distinguished himself, and she was rejoiced to find, that he had since risen so rapidly in his profession.—As to Miss Ellen Elmour, she was a very charming sensible young woman, no doubt; and Miss Turnbull assured Mrs. Wynne, she was delighted to hear she was so suitably married in point of understanding and temper, and all those sort of things—and besides, to a gentleman of a reasonable fortune, which she was happy to hear Mr. C. Wynne possessed.

Here she was interrupted in her speech —the door opened, and the Duchess of ———, Mr. and Mrs. Elmour, and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Wynne, were announced. Our heroine was not prepared

for the sight of the duchess; and her grace's appearance made her receive her old friends in a manner very different from that in which she had determined to meet them. Practised as she was, she stood irresolute and awkward, whilst Ellen, with easy graceful kindness, accosted her, and immediately introduced her, to the Duchess of ——. As Mr. Frederick Elmour approached, and as his beautiful wife was presented to Miss Turnbull, not all her efforts could conceal the mortification she endured, whilst she pronounced that—

"She was vastly happy—quite delighted—that all this was really such an agreeable and *unexpected surprise* to her .... for she did not even know any of her Yorhskire friends were in town."

Mrs. Ingoldsby came up to her assistance. Miss Turnbull rallied her spirits, and determined to make her stand upon the exclusive ground of fashion. Those who comprehend the rights of the privileged orders of fashion are aware, that

even a commoner, who is in a certain *set*, is far superior to a duchess who is not supposed to move in that magic circle. Almeria, upon this principle, began to talk to the Duchess of —— of some of her acquaintance, who were of the highest *ton*, and then affectedly checked herself, and begged pardon, and looked surprised at Mrs. Ingoldsby, when she found that her grace was not acquainted with them. Much as Miss Turnbull had reason to complain of Lady Pierrepoint, and the young bride the marchioness, she now thought that their names would do her honour, and she scrupled not to speak of them as her best friends, and as the most amiable creatures existing.—Such is the meanness and insufficiency of vanity!

"Poor Lady Pierrepoint," said the Duchess of ——, "with her independent fortune, what could tempt her to enslave herself, as she has done, to a court life?"

"Her ladyship finds herself suited to her situation, I believe," said Miss Turn-

bull.—"Lady Pierrepoint is certainly formed, more than most people I know, to succeed and shine in a court; and she is in favour, and in power and in fashion."

"Does it follow of course, that she is happy?" said Ellen.

"O! happy—of course, I suppose so."

"No doubt," said Mrs. Ingoldsby, "she has every reason to be happy; has not she just made her niece a marchioness?"

Miss Turnbull repeated "*Happy!* to be sure Lady Pierrepoint is happy, if any body in the world is happy."—A short sigh escaped from our heroine.

Ellen heard the sigh, and attended to it more than to her words; she looked upon her with compassion, and endeavoured to change the conversation.

"We spend this winter in town; and as I think I know your *real* tastes, Almeria," said she, taking Almeria's hand, "we must have the pleasure of introducing you to some of her grace's lite-

rary friends, who will, I am sure, please and suit you particularly."

Mr. Frederick Elmour, who now really pitied Almeria, though in his pity there was a strong mixture of contempt, joined his sister in her kindness, and named and described some of the people whom he thought she would be most desirous of knowing. The names struck Miss Turnbull's ears, for they were the names of persons distinguished in the fashionable as well as in the literary world; and she was dismayed and mortified by the discovery, that her *country friends* had by some means, incomprehensible to her, gained distinction and intimacy in society where she had merely admission; she was vexed beyond expression, when she found that *the Elmours* were superior to her even on her own ground. At this instant Mrs. Wynne, with her usual simplicity, asked Mrs. Elmour and Ellen, why they had not brought their charming children with them, adding, "You are, my dears, without exception, the two

happiest mothers and wives I am acquainted with. And after all, what happiness is there equal to domestic happiness?——O my dear Miss Turnbull, trust me, though I'm a silly old woman—there's nothing like it—and friends at court are not like friends at home—and all the Lady Pierrepoints that ever were, or ever will be born, are not, as you'll find when you come to try them, like one of these plain good Ellens and Elmours."

The address, simple as it was, came so home to Almeria's experience, and so many recollections rushed at once upon her memory, that all her factitious character of a fine lady gave way to natural feeling, and suddenly she burst into tears.

"Good heavens! my dear Miss Turnbull," cried Mrs. Ingoldsby, "what is the matter?—Are not you well?—Salts! salts!—the heat of the room!—Poor thing!—she has such weak nerves.—Mr. Elmour, may I trouble you to ring the bell for our carriage? Miss Turnbull has such sensibility! This meeting, so un-

expected, with so many old friends, has quite overcome her."

Miss Turnbull, recalled to herself by Mrs. Ingoldsby's voice, repeated the request to have her carriage immediately, and departed with Mrs. Ingoldsby as soon as she possibly could, utterly abashed and mortified; mortified most at not having been able to conceal her mortification. Incapable absolutely of articulating, she left Mrs. Ingoldsby to cover her retreat, as well as she could, with weak nerves and sensibility.

Even the charitable Mrs. Wynne was now heard to acknowledge, that she could neither approve of Miss Turnbull's conduct, nor frame any apology for it. She confessed that it looked very like what she of all things detested most—*ingratitude.* Her nephew, who had been a cool observant spectator of this evening's performance, was glad that his aunt's mind was now decided by Almeria's conduct. He exclaimed, that he would not marry such a woman, if her portion were to be the mines of Peru.

Thus Miss Turnbull lost all chance of the esteem and affection of another man of sense and temper, who might even at this late period of her life have recalled her from the follies of dissipation, and rendered her permanently happy.

And now that our heroine must have lost all power of interesting the reader, now that the pity even of the most indulgent must be utterly sunk in contempt, we shall take our leave of her, resigning her to that misery, which she had been long preparing for herself. It is sufficient to say, that after this period she had some offers from men of fashion of ruined fortunes; but these she rejected, still fancying, that with her wealth, which had been prodigiously increased, she could not fail to make a splendid match. So she went on coqueting and coqueting, rejecting and rejecting, till at length she arrived at an age, when she could reject no longer. She ceased to be an object to matrimonial adventurers, but to these succeeded a swarm of female legacy-hunters. Among the most distinguished was her

companion, Mrs. Ingoldsby, whose character she soon discovered to be artful and selfish in the extreme. This lady's flattery, therefore, lost all its power to charm, but yet it became necessary to Almeria; and even when she knew that she was duped, she could not part with Mrs. Ingoldsby, because it was not in her power to supply the place of a flatterer with a *friend.*—A friend! that first blessing of life, cannot be bought—it must be deserved.

Miss, or as she must now be called *Mrs.* Almeria Turnbull, is still alive—probably at this moment haunting some place of public amusement, or stationary at the card-table. Wherever she may be, she is despised and discontented, one example more amongst thousands, that wealth cannot purchase, or fashion bestow, real happiness.

"See how the world its veterans rewards,—
"A youth of folly, an old age of cards!"

Edgeworthstown,
1802.

MADAME DE FLEURY.

MADAME DE FLEURY.

CHAPTER I.

"There oft are heard the notes of infant wo,
"The short thick sob, loud scream, and shriller squall.
"How can you, mothers, vex your infants so?" POPE.

"D'ABORD, Madame, c'est impossible! —Madame ne descendra pas ici*?" said François, the footman of Madame de Fleury, with a half expostulatory, half indignant look, as he let down the step of her carriage at the entrance of a dirty passage, that led to one of the most miserable-looking houses in Paris.

"But what can be the cause of the cries which I hear in this house?" said Madame de Fleury.

* In the first place, my lady, it is impossible! Surely my lady will not get out of her carriage here?

" 'Tis only some child, who is crying," replied François; and he would have put up the step, but his lady was not satisfied.

" 'Tis nothing in the world," continued he, with a look of appeal to the coachman — "it *can* be nothing, but some children, who are locked up there above. The mother, the workwoman my lady wants, is not at home, that's certain."

" I must know the cause of these cries, I must see these children," said Madame de Fleury, getting out of her carriage.

François held his arm for his lady as she got out of the carriage.

" Bon!" cried he with an air of vexation. " Si Madame la veut absolument, à la bonne heure!—Mais Madame sera abimée. Madame verra que j'ai raison. Madame ne montera jamais ce vilain escalier. D'ailleurs c'est au cinquième. Mais, Madame, c'est impossible*."

* To be sure it must be as my lady pleases—but my lady will find it terribly dirty!—my lady will find

Notwithstanding the impossibility, Madame de Fleury proceeded, and bidding her talkative footman wait in the entry, made her way up the dark, dirty, broken staircase, the sound of the cries increasing every instant, till, as she reached the fifth story, she heard the shrieks of one in violent pain. She hastened to the door of the room, from which the cries proceeded; the door was fastened, and the noise was so great, that though she knocked as loud as she was able, she could not immediately make herself heard. At last the voice of a child from within answered,

"The door is locked— mammy has the key in her pocket, and won't be home till night; and here's Victoire has tumbled from the top of the big press, and it is she that is shrieking so."

Madame de Fleury ran down the stairs which she had ascended with so much

I was right—my lady will never get up that shocking staircase, it is impossible!

difficulty, called to her footman who was waiting in the entry, dispatched him for a surgeon, and then she returned to obtain, from some people who lodged in the house, assistance to force open the door of the room in which the children were confined.

On the next floor there was a smith at work, filing so earnestly, that he did not hear the screams of the children. When his door was pushed open; and the bright vision of Madame de Fleury appeared to him, his astonishment was so great, that he seemed incapable of comprehending what she said. In a strong provincial accent he repeated, "*Plait-il?*" and stood aghast till she had explained herself three times; then suddenly exclaiming, "Ah! c'est çà!"—he collected his tools precipitately, and followed to obey her orders. The door of the room was at last forced half open, for a press that had been overturned prevented its opening entirely. The horrible smells that issued did not overcome Madame de

Fleury's humanity: she squeezed her way into the room, and behind the fallen press saw three little children: the youngest, almost an infant, ceased roaring, and ran to a corner; the eldest, a boy of about eight years old, whose face and clothes were covered with blood, held on his knee a girl younger than himself, whom he was trying to pacify, but who struggled most violently, and screamed incessantly, regardless of Madame de Fleury, to whose questions she made no answer.

"Where are you hurt, my dear?" repeated Madame de Fleury, in a soothing voice. "Only tell me where you feel pain?"

The boy, showing his sister's arm, said in a surly tone—"It is this that is hurt—but it was not I did it."

"It was, it *was*," cried the girl as loud as she could vociferate; "it was Maurice threw me down from the top of the press."

"No—it was you that were pushing

me, Victoire, and you fell backwards.—Have done scratching, and show your arm to the lady."

"I can't," said the girl.

"She won't," said the boy.

"She *cannot*," said Madame de Fleury, kneeling down to examine it. "She cannot move it: I am afraid that it is broken."

"Don't touch it! don't touch it!" cried the girl, screaming more violently.

"Ma'am, she screams that way for nothing often," said the boy. "Her arm is no more broke than mine, I'm sure; she'll move it well enough when she's not cross."

"I am afraid," said Madame de Fleury, "that her arm is broken."

"Is it, indeed?" said the boy, with a look of terrour.

"O! don't touch it—you'll kill me, you are killing me," screamed the poor girl, whilst Madame de Fleury with the greatest care endeavoured to join the bones in their proper place, and resolved

to hold the arm till the arrival of the surgeon.

From the feminine appearance of this lady, no stranger would have expected such resolution; but with all the natural sensibility and graceful delicacy of her sex, she had none of that weakness or affectation, which incapacitates from being useful in real distress. In most sudden accidents, and in all domestic misfortunes, female resolution and presence of mind are indispensably requisite: safety, health, and life, often depend upon the fortitude of women. Happy they who, like Madame de Fleury, possess strength of mind united with the utmost gentleness of manner and tenderness of disposition!

Soothed by this lady's sweet voice, the child's rage subsided, and no longer struggling, the poor little girl sat quietly on her lap, sometimes writhing and moaning with pain.

The surgeon at length arrived: her arm was set, and he said, "that she had probably been saved much future

pain by Madame de Fleury's presence of mind."

"Sir—will it soon be well?" said Maurice to the surgeon.

"O yes, very soon, I dare say," said the little girl. "To-morrow, perhaps; for now that it is tied up, it does not hurt me to signify—and after all, I do believe, Maurice, it was not you threw me down."

As she spoke, she held up her face to kiss her brother.—"That is right," said Madame de Fleury: "there is a good sister."

The little girl put out her lips, offering a second kiss, but the boy turned hastily away to rub the tears from his eyes with the back of his hand.

"I am not cross now: am I, Maurice?" said she.

"No, Victoire, I was cross myself when I said *that*."

As Victoire was going to speak again, the surgeon imposed silence, observing, that she must be put to bed, and should

be kept quiet. Madame de Fleury laid her upon the bed, as soon as Maurice had cleared it of the things with which it was covered; and as they were spreading the ragged blanket over the little girl, she whispered a request to Madame de Fleury, that she would "stay till her mamma came home, to beg Maurice off from being whipped, if mamma should be angry."

Touched by this instance of goodness, and compassionating the desolate condition of these children, Madame de Fleury complied with Victoire's request; resolving to remonstrate with their mother for leaving them locked up in this manner. They did not know to what part of the town their mother was gone; they could tell only, "that she was to go to a great many different places to carry back work, and to bring home more; and that she expected to be in by five."—It was now half after four.

Whilst Madame de Fleury waited, she asked the boy to give her a full account

of the manner in which the accident had happened.

"Why, Ma'am," said Maurice, twisting and untwisting a ragged handkerchief, as he spoke—"the first beginning of all the mischief was—we had nothing to do, so we went to the ashes to make dirt pies; but Babet would go so close, that she burnt her petticoat, and threw about all our ashes, and plagued us, and we whipped her: but all would not do, she would not be quiet; so to get out of her reach, we climbed up by this chair on the table to the top of the press, and there we were well enough for a little while, till somehow we began to quarrel about the old scissors, and we struggled hard for them, till I got this cut."

Here he unwound the handkerchief, and for the first time showed the wound, which he had never mentioned before.

"Then," continued he, "when I got the cut, I shoved Victoire, and she pushed at me again, and I was keeping her off, and her foot slipped, and down she fell;

and caught by the press-door, and pulled it and me after her, and that's all I know."

"It is well that you were not both killed," said Madame de Fleury. "Are you often left locked up in this manner by yourselves, and without any thing to do?"

"Yes, always, when mamma is abroad —except sometimes we are let out upon the stairs, or in the street; but mamma says we get into mischief there."

This dialogue was interrupted by the return of the mother. She came up stairs slowly, much fatigued, and with a heavy bundle under her arm.

"How now! Maurice? how comes my door open? What's all this?" cried she in an angry voice; but seeing a lady sitting upon her child's bed, she stopped short in great astonishment.—Madame de Fleury related what had happened, and averted her anger from Maurice, by gently expostulating upon the hardship and hazard of leaving her young children

in this manner during so many hours of the day.

"Why, my lady," replied the poor woman wiping her forehead, "every hard-working woman in Paris does the same with her children, and what can I do else? I must earn bread for these helpless ones, and to do that I must be out backwards and forwards, and to the furthest parts of the town, often from morning till night, with those that employ me; and I cannot afford to send the children to school, or to keep any kind of a servant to look after them; and when I'm away, if I let them run about these stairs and entries, or go into the streets, they do get a little exercise and air to be sure, such as it is; on which account I do let them out sometimes; but then a deal of mischief comes of that too—they learn all kinds of wickedness, and would grow up to be no better than pick-pockets, if they were let often to consort with the little vagabonds they find in the streets.

So what to do better for them I don't know."

The poor mother sat down upon the fallen press, looked at Victoire, and wept bitterly. Madame de Fleury was struck with compassion: but she did not satisfy her feelings merely by words of comfort, or by the easy donation of some money —she resolved to do something more, and something better.

CHAPTER II.

"Come often, then; for haply in my bow'r
"Amusement, knowledge, wisdom, thou may'st gain;
"If I one soul improve, I have not liv'd in vain."

BEATTIE.

IT is not so easy to do good, as those who have never attempted it may imagine; and they, who without consideration follow the mere instinct of pity, often by their imprudent generosity create evils more pernicious to society than any which they partially remedy. "Warm Charity, the general friend," may become the general enemy, unless she consults her head as well as her heart. Whilst she pleases herself with the idea, that she daily feeds hundreds of the poor, she is perhaps preparing want and famine for thousands. While she delights herself

with the anticipation of gratitude for her bounties, she is often exciting only unreasonable expectations, inducing habits of dependence, and submission to slavery.

Those who wish to do good, should attend to Experience, from whom they may receive lessons upon the largest scale, that time and numbers can afford.

Madame de Fleury was aware, that neither a benevolent disposition, nor a large fortune, was sufficient to enable her to be of real service, without the constant exercise of her judgement. She had therefore listened with deference to the conversation of well-informed men: upon those subjects ladies have not always the means or the wish to acquire extensive and accurate knowledge. Though a Parisian belle, she had read with attention some of those books, which are generally thought too dry, or too deep for her sex. Consequently her benevolence was neither wild in theory, nor precipitate, nor ostentatious in practice.

Touched with compassion for a little

girl, whose arm had been accidentally broken, and shocked by the discovery of the confinement and the dangers, to which numbers of children in Paris were doomed, she did not make a parade of her sensibility. She did not talk of her feelings in fine sentences to a circle of opulent admirers, nor did she project for the relief of the little sufferers some magnificent establishment, which she could not execute or superintend. She was contented with attempting only what she had reasonable hopes of accomplishing.

The gift of education she believed to be more advantageous than the gift of money to the poor; as it ensures the means both of future subsistence and happiness. But the application even of this incontrovertible principle requires caution and judgement. To crowd numbers of children into a place called a school, to abandon them to the management of any person called a school-master, or a school-mistress, is not sufficient to secure the blessings of a good education.

Madame de Fleury was sensible, that the greatest care is necessary in the choice of the person, to whom young children are to be intrusted: she knew that only a certain number can be properly directed by one superintendant, and that by attempting to do too much she might do nothing, or worse than nothing. Her school was formed, therefore, on a small scale, which she could enlarge to any extent, if it should be found to succeed. From some of the families of poor people, who in earning their bread are obliged to spend most of the day from home, she selected twelve little girls, of whom Victoire was the eldest, and she was between six and seven.

The person under whose care Madame de Fleury wished to place these children was a nun of the order of *la Charitè*, with whose simplicity of character, benevolence, and mild steady temper she was thoroughly acquainted. Sister Frances was delighted with the plan. Any scheme that promised to be of service to her fel-

low-creatures was sure of meeting with her approbation; but this suited her taste peculiarly, because she was extremely fond of children. No young person had ever boarded six months at her convent without becoming attached to good Sister Frances.

The period of which we are writing was some years before convents were abolished; but the strictness of their rules had in many instances been consider ably relaxed. Without much difficulty, permission was obtained from the abbess for our nun to devote her time during the day to the care of these poor children, upon condition, that she should regularly return to her convent every night before evening prayers. The house, which Madame de Fleury chose for her little school, was in an airy part of the town; it did not face the street, but was separated from other buildings at the back of a court, retired from noise and bustle. The two rooms intended for the occupation of the children were neat and clean,

but perfectly simple, with white-washed walls, furnished only with wooden stools and benches, and plain deal tables. The kitchen was well lighted, for light is essential to cleanliness, and it was provided with utensils; and for these appropriate places were allotted, to give the habit and the taste of order. The school-room opened into a garden larger than is usually seen in towns. The nun, who had been accustomed to purchase provision for her convent, undertook to prepare daily for the children breakfast and dinner; they were to sup and sleep at their respective homes. Their parents were to take them to Sister Frances every morning, when they went out to work, and to call for them upon their return home every evening. By this arrangement, the natural ties of affection and intimacy between the children and their parents would not be loosened; they would be separate only at the time, when their absence must be inevitable. Madame de Fleury thought, that any education, which

estranges children entirely from their parents, must be fundamentally erroneous; that such a separation must tend to destroy that sense of filial affection and duty, and those principles of domestic subordination, on which so many of the interests, and much of the virtue and happiness, of society depend. The parents of these poor children were eager to trust them to her care, and they strenuously endeavoured to promote what they perceived to be entirely to their advantage. They promised to take their daughters to school punctually every morning—a promise which was likely to be kept, as a good breakfast was to be ready at a certain hour and not to wait for any body. The parents looked forward with pleasure also to the idea of calling for their little girls at the end of their day's labour; and of taking them home to their family supper. During the intermediate hours, the children were constantly to be employed, or in exercise. It was difficult to provide suitable employments for their early

age: but even the youngest of those admitted could be taught to wind balls of cotton, thread, and silk, for haberdashers; or they could shell peas and beans, &c. for a neighbouring *traiteur;* or they could weed in a garden. The next in age could learn knitting and plain work, reading, writing, and arithmetic. As the girls should grow up, they were to be made useful in the care of the house. Sister Frances said, "she could teach them to wash and iron, and that she would make them as skilful in cookery as she was herself." This last was doubtless a rash promise, for in most of the mysteries of the culinary art, especially in the medical branches of it, in making savoury messes palatable to the sick, few could hope to equal the neat-handed Sister Frances. She had a variety of other accomplishments—but her humility and good sense forbade her, upon the present occasion, to mention these. She said nothing of embroidery, or of painting, or of cutting out paper, or of

carving in ivory, though in all these she excelled; her cuttings out in paper were exquisite as the finest lace; her embroidered housewives, and her painted boxes, and her fan mounts, and her curiously wrought ivory toys, had obtained for her the highest reputation in the convent, amongst the best judges in the world. Those only, who have philosophically studied and thoroughly understand the nature of fame and vanity, can justly appreciate the self-denial, or magnanimity, of Sister Frances, in forbearing to enumerate or boast of these things. She alluded to them but once; and in the slightest and most humble manner.

"These little creatures are too young for us to think of teaching them any thing but plain work at present; but if hereafter any of them should show a superior genius, we can cultivate it properly; Heaven has been pleased to endow me with the means—at least our convent says so."

The actions of Sister Frances showed

as much moderation as her words; for though she was strongly tempted to adorn her new dwelling with those specimens of her skill, which had long been the glory of her apartment in the convent, yet she resisted the impulse, and contented herself with hanging over the chimney-piece of her school-room a Madonna of her own painting.

The day arrived, when she was to receive her pupils in their new habitation. When the children entered the room for the first time, they paid the Madonna the homage of their unfeigned admiration. Involuntarily the little crowd stopped short at the sight of the picture. Some dormant emotions of human vanity were now awakened—played for a moment about the heart of Sister Frances—and may be forgiven. Her vanity was innocent and transient, her benevolence permanent and useful. Repressing the vain-glory of an artist, as she fixed her eyes upon the Madonna, her thoughts rose to higher objects, and she seized this happy

moment to impress upon the minds of her young pupils their first religious ideas and feelings. There was such unaffected piety in her manner, such goodness in her countenance, such persuasion in her voice, and simplicity in her words, that the impression she made was at once serious, pleasing, and not to be effaced.— Much depends upon the moment and the manner, in which the first notions of religion are communicated to children; if these ideas be connected with terrour, and produced when the mind is sullen or in a state of dejection, the future religious feelings are sometimes of a gloomy dispiriting sort; but if the first impression be made when the heart is expanded by hope, or touched by affection, these emotions are happily and permanently associated with religion. This should be particularly attended to by those, who undertake the instruction of the children of the poor, who must lead a life of labour, and can seldom have leisure, or inclination, when arrived at years of discretion,

to re-examine the principles early infused into their minds. They cannot, in their riper age, conquer, by reason, those superstitious terrours, or bigoted prejudices, which render their victims miserable, or perhaps criminal. To attempt to rectify any errours in the foundation, after an edifice has been constructed, is dangerous; the foundation, therefore, should be laid with care.—The religious opinions of Sister Frances were strictly united with just rules of morality, strongly enforcing, as the essential means of obtaining present and future happiness, the practice of the social virtues; so that no good or wise persons, however they might differ from her in modes of faith, could doubt the beneficial influence of her general principles, or disapprove of the manner in which they were inculcated.

Detached from every other worldly interest, this benevolent nun devoted all her earthly thoughts to the children, of whom she had undertaken the charge.

She watched over them with unceasing vigilance, whilst diffidence of her own abilities was happily supported by her high opinion of Madame de Fleury's judgement. This lady constantly visited her pupils every week; not in the hasty negligent manner, in which fine ladies sometimes visit charitable institutions, imagining that the honour of their presence is to work miracles, and that every thing will go on rightly when they have said, "*Let it be so;*" or, "*I must have it so.*" Madame de Fleury's visits were not of this dictatorial or cursory nature. Not minutes, but hours, she devoted to these children—she who could charm by the grace of her manners, and delight by the elegance of her conversation, the most polished circles* and the best informed societies of Paris, preferred to the glory

* It was of this lady that Marmontel said—"She has the art of making the most common thoughts appear new, and the most uncommon, simple, by the elegance and clearness of her expressions."

of being admired the pleasure of being useful.

> "Her life as lovely as her face,
> "Each duty mark'd with every grace;
> "Her native sense improv'd by reading,
> "Her native sweetness by good breeding."

CHAPTER III.

"Ah me! how much I fear lest pride it be:
"But if that pride it be, which thus inspires,
"Beware, ye dames! with nice discernment see,
"Ye quench not too the sparks of nobler fires."

SHENSTONE.

By repeated observation, and by attending to the minute *reports* of Sister Frances, Madame de Fleury soon became acquainted with the habits and temper of each individual in this little society. The most intelligent and the most amiable of these children was Victoire. Whence her superiority arose, whether her abilities were naturally more vivacious than those of her companions, or whether they had been more early developed by accidental excitation, we cannot pretend to determine; lest we should

involve ourselves in the intricate question respecting natural genius—a metaphysical point, which we shall not in this place stop to discuss. Till the world has an accurate philosophical dictionary, a work not to be expected in less than half a dozen centuries, this question will never be decided to general satisfaction. In the mean time, we may proceed with our story.

Deep was the impression made on Victoire's heart by the kindness, that Madame de Fleury showed her at the time her arm was broken; and her gratitude was expressed with all the enthusiastic *fondness* of childhood. Whenever she spoke or heard of Madame de Fleury, her countenance became interested and animated, in a degree that would have astonished a cool English spectator. Every morning her first question to Sister Frances was—"Will *she* come to day?"—If Madame de Fleury was expected, the hours and the minutes were counted, and the sand in the hour-glass, that stood on

the school-room table, was frequently shaken: the moment she appeared, Victoire ran to her, and was silent; satisfied with standing close beside her, holding her gown when unperceived, and watching, as she spake and moved, every turn of her countenance. Delighted by these marks of sensibility, Sister Frances would have praised the child, but was warned by Madame de Fleury to refrain from injudicious eulogiums, lest she should teach her affectation.

"If I must not praise, you will permit me at least to love her," said Sister Frances.

The affection of Sister Frances for Victoire was increased by compassion; during two months the poor child's arm hung in a sling, so that she could not venture to play with her companions. At their hours of recreation, she used to sit on the school-room steps, looking down into the garden at the scene of merriment, in which she could not partake.

For those who know how to find it,

there is good in every thing. Sister Frances used to take her seat on the steps, sometimes with her work, and sometimes with a book; and Victoire, tired of being quite idle, listened with eagerness to the stories, which Sister Frances read, or watched with interest the progress of her work: soon she longed to imitate what she saw done with so much pleasure, and begged to be taught to work and read. By degrees, she learned her alphabet; and could soon, to the amazement of her school-fellows, read the names of all the animals in Sister Frances's *picture book*.—No matter how trifling the thing done, or the knowledge acquired, a great point is gained by giving the desire for employment. Children frequently become industrious from impatience of the pains and penalties of idleness. Count Rumford showed, that he understood childish nature perfectly well, when, in his house of industry at Munich, he compelled the young children to sit for some time idle in a gallery round the hall, where others a

little older than themselves were busied at work.—During Victoire's state of idle convalescence, she acquired the desire to be employed, and she consequently soon became more industrious than her neighbours. Succeeding in her first efforts, she was praised—was pleased, and persevered till she became an example of activity to her companions. But Victoire, though now nearly seven years old, was not quite perfect. Naturally, or accidentally, she was very passionate, and not a little self-willed.

One day being mounted, horseman like, with whip in hand upon the banister of the flight of stairs leading from the school-room to the garden, she called in a tone of triumph to her play-fellows, desiring them to stand out of the way, and see her slide from top to bottom. At this moment Sister Frances came to the school-room door, and forbade the feat: but Victoire, regardless of all prohibition, slid down instantly, and moreover was going to repeat the glorious operation,

when Sister Frances, catching hold of herarm, pointed to a heap of sharp stones that lay on the ground upon the other side of the banisters.

"I am not afraid," said Victoire.

"But if you fall there, you may break your arm again."

"And if I do, I can bear it," said Victoire. "Let me go, pray let me go, I must do it."

"No; I forbid you, Victoire, to slide down again! — Babet, and all the little ones, would follow your example, and perhaps break their necks."

The nun, as she spoke, attempted to compel Victoire to dismount; but she was to much of a heroine, that she would do nothing upon compulsion. Clinging fast to the banisters, she resisted with all her might; she kicked and screamed and screamed and kicked; but at last her feet were taken prisoners: then grasping the railway with one hand, with the other she brandished high the little whip.

"What!" said the mild nun, "would you strike me with that *arm*?"

The arm dropped instantly—Victoire recollected Madame de Fleury's kindness the day when that arm was broken; dismounting immediately, she threw herself upon her knees in the midst of the crowd of young spectators, and begged pardon of Sister Frances. For the rest of the day, she was as gentle as a lamb; nay some assert, that the effects of her contrition were visible during the remainder of the week.

Having thus found the secret of reducing the little rebel to obedience by touching her on the tender point of gratitude, the nun had recourse to this expedient in all perilous cases; but one day, when she was boasting of the infallible operation of her charm, Madame de Fleury advised her to forbear recurring to it frequently, lest she should wear out the sensibility she so much loved. In consequence of this counsel, Victoire's

violence of temper was sometimes reduced by force, and sometimes corrected by reason; but the principle and the feeling of gratitude were not exhausted or weakened in the struggle. The hope of reward operated upon her generous mind more powerfully than the fear of punishment; and Madame de Fleury devised rewards with as much ability, as some legislators invent punishments.

Victoire's brother Maurice, who was now of an age to earn his own bread, had a strong desire to be bound apprentice to the smith, who worked in the house where his mother lodged. This most ardent wish of his soul he had imparted to his sister; and she consulted her benefactress, whom she considered as all powerful in this, as in every other affair.

"Your brother's wish shall be accomplished," replied Madame de Fleury, "if you can keep your temper one month. If you are never in a passion for a whole month, I will undertake, that your bro

ther shall be bound apprentice to his friend the smith. To your companions, to Sister Frances, and above all to yourself, I trust, to make me a just report this day month.

CHAPTER IV.

"You she preferr'd to all the gay resorts,
"Where female vanity might wish to shine,
"The pomp of cities, and the pride of courts."

LYTTLETON.

AT the end of the time prescribed, the judges, including Victoire herself, who was the most severe of them all, agreed she had justly deserved her reward. Maurice obtained his wish; and Victoire's temper never relapsed into its former bad habits—so powerful is the effect of a well-chosen motive! — Perhaps the historian may be blamed for dwelling on such trivial anecdotes; yet a lady, who was accustomed to the conversation of deep philosophers, and polished courtiers, listened without disdain to these simple annals. Nothing appeared to her

a trifle, that could tend to form the habits of temper, truth, honesty, order, and industry;—habits, which are to be early induced, not by solemn precepts, but by practical lessons. A few more examples of these shall be recorded, notwithstanding the fear of being tiresome.

One day little Babet, who was now five years old, saw, as she was coming to school, an old woman sitting at a corner of the street, beside a large black brazier full of roasted chesnuts. Babet thought, that the chesnuts looked and smelled very good; the old woman was talking earnestly to some people, who were on her other side; Babet filled her workbag with chesnuts, and then ran after her mother and sister, who having turned the corner of the street, had not seen what passed. When Babet came to the school-room, she opened her bag with triumph, displayed her treasure, and offered to divide it with her companions.—"Here Victoire," said she, "here is the largest chesnut for you."

But Victoire would not take it; for she said, that Babet had no money, and that she could not have come honestly by these chesnuts. She spoke so forcibly upon this point, that even those, who had the tempting morsel actually at their lips, forbore to bite; those who had bitten, laid down their half-eaten prize; and those, who had their hands full of chesnuts, rolled them back again towards the bag. Babet cried with vexation.

"I burned my fingers in getting them for you, and now you won't eat them!—Nor I must not eat them!" said she: then curbing her passion, she added—"But at any rate I won't be a thief—I am sure I did not think it was being a thief just to take a few chesnuts from an old woman, who has such heaps and heaps—but Victoire says it is wrong, and I would not be a thief for all the chesnuts in the world—I'll throw them all into the fire this minute!"

"No; give them back again to the old woman," said Victoire.

"But may be, she would scold me for having taken them," said Babet; "or who knows but she might whip me."

"And if she did, could not you bear it?" said Victoire; "I am sure I would rather bear twenty whippings, than be a thief."

"Twenty whippings! that's a great many," said Babet; "and I am so little, consider—and that woman has such a monstrous arm!—Now if it was Sister Frances, it would be another thing.—But come! if you will go with me, Victoire, you shall see how I will behave."

"We will all go with you," said Victoire.

"Yes, all!" said the children.—"And Sister Frances, I dare say, would go, if you asked her."

Babet ran, and told Sister Frances, and she readily consented to accompany the little penitent to make restitution. The chestnut-woman did not whip Babet, nor even scold her, but said she was sure, that since the child was so honest as to re-

turn what she had taken, she would never steal again.—This was the most *glorious* day of Babet's life, and the happiest. When the circumstance was told to Madame de Fleury, she gave the little girl a bag of the best chesnuts the old woman could select, and Babet with great delight shared her reward with her companions.

" But, alas! these chesnuts are not roasted.—O! if we could but roast them, Sister Frances?" said the children.

Sister Frances placed in the middle of the table, on which the chestnuts were spread, a small earthenware furnace—a delightful toy, commonly used by children in Paris to cook their little feasts.

" This can be bought for sixpence," said she; " and if each of you twelve earn one halfpenny a piece to day, you can purchase it to night, and I will put a little fire into it, and you will then be able to roast your chestnuts."

The children ran eagerly to their work —some to wind worsted for a woman who paid them a *liard* for each ball, others to shell peas for a neighbouring traiteur—all rejoicing, that they were able to earn *something*. The elder girls, under the directions, and with the assistance, of Sister Frances, completed making, washing, and ironing half a dozen little caps, to supply a baby-linen warehouse. At the end of the day, when the sum of the produce of their labours was added together, they were surprised to find, that, instead of one, they could purchase two furnaces. They received and enjoyed the reward of their united industry. The success of their first efforts was fixed in their memory; for they were very happy roasting the chestnuts, and they were all (Sister Frances inclusive) unanimous in opinion, that no chestnuts ever were so good, or so well roasted. Sister Frances always partook in their little innocent amusements, and

it was her great delight to be the dispenser of rewards, which at once conferred present pleasure, and cherished future virtue.

CHAPTER V.

"To virtue wake the pulses of the heart,
"And bid the tear of emulation start."

ROGERS.

VICTOIRE, who gave constant exercise to the benevolent feelings of the aimable nun, became every day more dear to her. Far from having the selfishness of a favourite, Victoire loved to bring into public notice the good actions of her companions. "Stoop down your ear to me, Sister Frances," said she, "and I will tell you a secret—I will tell you why my friend Annette is growing so thin—I found it out this morning—she does not eat above half her soup every day. Look, there's her porringer covered up in the corner—she carries it home to her mother, who is sick, and who has not bread to eat."

Madame de Fleury came in, whilst Sister Frances was yet bending down to hear this secret; it was repeated to her; and she immediately ordered, that a certain allowance of bread should be given to Annette every day to carry to her mother during her illness.

"I give it in charge to you, Victoire, to remember this, and I am sure it will never be forgotten. Here is an order for you upon my baker: run, and show it to Annette. This is a pleasure you deserve; I am glad that you have chosen for your friend a girl who is so good a daughter. Good daughters make good friends."

By similar instances of goodness, Victoire obtained the love and confidence of her companions, notwithstanding her manifest superiority. In their turn, they were eager to proclaim her merits; and as Sister Frances and Madame de Fleury administered justice with invariable impartiality, the hateful passions of envy and jealousy were never excited in this little society. No servile sycophant, no

malicious detractor, could rob or defraud their little virtues of their due reward.

"Whom shall I trust to take this to Madame de Fleury?" said Sister Frances, carrying into the garden, where the children were playing, a pot of fine jonquils, which she had brought from her convent. —"These are the first jonquils I have seen this year, and finer I never beheld! —Whom shall I trust to take them to Madame de Fleury this evening?—It must be some one who will not stop to stare about on the way, but who will be very, very careful—some one in whom I can place perfect dependence."

"It must be Victoire, then," cried every voice.

"Yes, she deserves it to day particularly," said Annette eagerly, "because she was not angry with Babet, when she did what was enough to put any body in a passion. Sister Frances, you know this cherry tree, which you grafted for Victoire last year, and that was yesterday so full of blossoms—now you see,

there is not a blossom left!—Babet plucked them all this morning to make a nosegay."

"But she did not know," said Victoire, "that pulling off the blossoms would prevent my having any cherries."

"O I am very sorry I was so foolish," said Babet; "Victoire did not even say a cross word to me."

"Though she was excessively anxious about the cherries," pursued Annette, "because she intended to have given the first she had to Madame de Fleury."

"Victoire, take the jonquils—it is but just," said Sister Frances. "How I do love to hear them all praise her!—I knew what she would be from the first."

With a joyful heart Victoire took the jonquils, promised to carry them with the utmost care, and not to stop to stare on the way. She set out to Madame de Fleury's hotel, which was in *la Place de Louis Seize*. It was late in the evening, the lamps were lighting, and as Victoire crossed the Pont de Louis Seize, she

stopped to look at the reflection of the lamps in the water, which appeared in succession, as they were lighted, spreading as if by magic along the river. While Victoire leaned over the battlements of the bridge, watching the rising of these stars of fire, a sudden push from the elbow of some rude passenger precipated her pot of jonquils into the Seine. The sound it made in the water was thunder to the ear of Victoire; she stood for an instant vainly hoping it would rise again, but the waters had closed over it for ever.

"Dans cet état affreux, que faire?
——————Mon devoir."

Victoire courageously proceeded to Madame de Fleury's, and desired to see her.

"D'abord c'est impossible—Madame is dressing to go to a concert;" said François.—"Cannot you leave your message?"

"O no," said Victoire; "it is of great consequence—I must see *her* myself; and she is so good, and you too, Monsieur

François, that I am sure you will not refuse."

"Well I remember one day you found the seal of my watch, which I dropped at your school-room door—one good turn deserves another. If it is possible, it shall be done—I will inquire of Madame's women."—"Follow me up stairs," said he: returning in a few minutes, "Madame will see you."

She followed him up the large staircase, and through a suite of apartments sufficiently grand to intimidate her young imagination.

"Madame est dans son cabinet.—Entrez—mais entrez donc, entrez, toujours."

Madame de Fleury was more richly dressed than usual; and her image was reflected in the large looking-glass, so that at the first moment Victoire thought she saw many fine ladies, but not one of them the lady she wanted.

"Well, Victoire, my child, what is the matter?"

" O, it is her voice!—I know you now, Madame, and I am not afraid—not afraid even to tell you how foolish I have been. Sister Frances trusted me to carry for you, Madame, a beautiful pot of jonquils, and she desired me not to stop on the way to stare; but I did stop to look at the lamps on the bridge, and I forgot the jonquils, and somebody brushed by me, and threw them into the river—and I am very sorry I was so foolish."

" And I am very glad, that you are so wise as to tell the truth, without attempting to make any paltry excuses. — Go home to Sister Frances, and assure her, that I am more obliged to her for making you such an honest girl, than I could be for a whole bed of jonquils."

Victoire's heart was so full, that she could not speak—she kissed Madame de Fleury's hand in silence, and then seemed to be lost in contemplation of her bracelet.

" Are you thinking, Victoire, that you should be much happier, if you had such

bracelets as these?—Believe me, you are mistaken if you think so; many people are unhappy, who wear fine bracelets; so, my child, content yourself."

"Myself! O madam, I was not thinking of myself, I was not wishing for bracelets—I was only thinking that . . ."

"That what?"

"That it is a pity you are so very rich; you have every thing in this world that you want, and I can never be of the least use to *you*—all my life I shall never be able to do *you* any good—and what," said Victoire, turning away to hide her tears, "what signifies the gratitude of such a poor little creature as I am?"

"Did you never hear the fable of the lion and the mouse, Victoire?"

"No, madam—never!"

"Then I will tell it to you."

Victoire looked up with eyes of eager expectation—François opened the door to announce, that the Marquis de M—— and the Comte de S——— were in the saloon; but Madame de Fleury staid

to tell Victoire her fable—she would not lose the opportunity of making an impression upon this child's heart.

It is whilst the mind is warm, that the deepest impressions can be made. Seizing the happy moment sometimes decides the character and the fate of a child. In this respect what advantages have the rich and great in educating the children of the poor! They have the power which their rank, and all its decorations, obtain over the imagination. Their smiles are favours, their words are listened to as oracular, they are looked up to as beings of a superior order. Their powers of working good are almost as great, though not quite so wonderful, as those formerly attributed to beneficent fairies.

CHAPTER VI.

"Knowledge for them unlocks her *useful* page,
"And virtue blossoms for a better age."

BARBAULD.

A FEW days after Madame de Fleury had told Victoire the fable of the lion and the mouse, she was informed by Sister Frances, that Victoire had put the fable into verse. It was wonderfully well done for a child of nine years old, and Madame de Fleury was tempted to praise the lines; but checking the enthusiasm of the moment, she considered whether it would be advantageous to cultivate her pupil's talents for poetry. Excellence in the poetic art cannot be obtained without a degree of application, for which a girl in her situation could not have leisure. To encourage her to become a mere rhyming scribbler, with-

out any chance of obtaining celebrity or securing subsistence, would be folly and cruelty.—Early prodigies, in the lower ranks of life, are seldom pemanently successful; they are cried up one day, and cried down the next. Their productions rarely have that superiority, which secures a fair preference in the great literary market. Their performances are, perhaps, said to be—*wonderful, all things considered, &c.* Charitable allowances are made; the books are purchased by associations of complaisant friends or opulent patrons; a kind of forced demand is raised, but this can be only temporary and delusive. In spite of bounties and of all the arts of protection, nothing but what is intrinsically good will long be preferred, when it must be purchased. But granting that positive excellence is attained, there is always danger, that for works of fancy the taste of the public may suddenly vary; there is a fashion in these things; and when the mode changes, the mere literary manufac-

turer is thrown out of employment; he is unable to turn his hand to another trade, or to any but his own peculiar branch of the business. The powers of the mind are often partially cultivated in these self-taught geniuses. We often see, that one part of their understanding is nourished to the prejudice of the rest—the imagination, for instance, at the expense of the judgement; so that, whilst they have acquired talents for show, they have none for use. In the affairs of common life, they are utterly ignorant and imbecile—or worse than imbecile. Early called into public notice, probably before their moral habits are formed; they are extolled for some play of fancy or of wit, as Bacon calls it, some *juggler's trick of the intellect*; immediately they take an aversion to plodding labour, they feel raised above their situation; *possessed* by the notion that genius exempts them, not only from labour, but from vulgar rules of prudence, they soon disgrace themselves by their conduct, are deserted by

their patrons, and sink into despair, or plunge into profligacy*.

Convinced of these melancholy truths, Madame de Fleury was determined not to add to the number of those imprudent or ostentatious patrons, who sacrifice to their own amusement and vanity the future happiness of their favourites. Victoire's verses were not handed about in fashionable circles, nor was she called upon to recite them before a brilliant audience, nor was she produced in public as a prodigy; she was educated in private, and by slow and sure degrees, to be a good, useful, and happy member of society. Upon the same principles which decided Madame de Fleury against encouraging Victoire to be a poetess, she refrained from giving any of her little pupils accomplishments unsuited to their situation. Some had a fine ear for music, others showed powers of dancing; but they were taught neither dancing

* To these observations there are honourable exceptions.

nor music—talents, which in their station were more likely to be dangerous than serviceable. They were not intended for actresses, or opera girls, but for shop girls, mantua-makers, work-women, and servants of different sorts. Consequently they were instructed in things which would be most necessary and useful to young women in their rank of life. Before they were ten years old, they could do all kinds of plain needle-work, they could read and write well, and they were mistresses of the common rules of arithmetic. After this age, they were practised by a writing-master in drawing out bills neatly, keeping accounts, and applying to every-day use their knowledge of arithmetic. Some were taught by a laundress to wash, and *get up* fine linen and lace; others were instructed by a neighbouring *traiteur* in those culinary mysteries, with which Sister Frances was unacquainted. In sweetmeats and confectionaries she yielded to no one; and she made her pupils as expert as herself.

Those who were intended for ladies' maids were taught mantua-making, and had lessons from Madame de Fleury's own woman in hair dressing.

Amongst her numerous friends and acquaintances, and amongst the shopkeepers, whom she was in the habit of employing, Madame de Fleury had means of placing and establishing her pupils suitably and advantageously: of this both they and their parents were aware, so that there was a constant and great motive operating continually to induce them to exert themselves, and to behave well. This reasonable hope of reaping the fruits of their education, and of being immediately rewarded for their good conduct; this perception of the connexion between what they are taught and what they are to become, is necessary to make young people assiduous; for want of attending to these principles, many splendid establishments have failed to produce pupils answerable to the expectations which had been formed of them.

During seven years, that Madame de Fleury persevered uniformly on the same plan, only one girl forfeited her protection —a girl of the name of Manon; she was Victoire's cousin; but totally unlike her in character.

When very young, her beautiful eyes and hair caught the fancy of a rich lady, who took her into her family as a sort of humble playfellow for her children. She was taught to dance and to sing: she soon excelled in these accomplishments, and was admired, and produced as a prodigy of talent. The lady of the house gave herself great credit for having discerned, and having *brought forward*, such talents. Manon's moral character was in the mean time neglected. In this house, where there was a constant scene of hurry and dissipation, the child had frequent opportunities and temptations to be dishonest. For some time she was not detected; her caressing manners pleased her patroness, and servile compliance with the humours of the children

of the family secured their good will. Encouraged by daily petty successes in the arts of deceit, she became a complete hypocrite. With culpable negligence, her mistress trusted implicitly to appearances; and without examining whether she was really honest, she suffered her to have free access to unlocked drawers and valuable cabinets. Several articles of dress were missed from time to time, but Manon managed so artfully, that she averted from herself all suspicion. Emboldened by this fatal impunity, she at last attempted depredations of more importance. She purloined a valuable snuff-box—was detected in disposing of the broken parts of it at a pawnbroker's, and was immediately discarded in disgrace; but by her tears, and vehement expressions of remorse, she so far worked upon the weakness of the lady of the house, as to prevail upon her to conceal the circumstance, that occasioned her dismissal. Some months afterwards Manon, pleading that she was thoroughly

reformed, obtained from this lady a recommendation to Madame de Fleury's school. It is wonderful, that people, who in other respects profess and practise integrity, can be so culpably weak, as to give good characters to those who do not deserve them. This is really one of the worst species of forgery. Imposed upon by this treacherous recommendation, Madame de Fleury received into the midst of her innocent young pupils one, who might have corrupted their minds secretly and irrecoverably. Fortunately a discovery was made in time of Manon's real disposition. A mere trifle led to the detection of her habits of falsehood. As she could not do any kind of needlework, she was employed in winding cotton; she was negligent, and did not in the course of the week wind the same number of balls as her companions; and to conceal this, she pretended that she had delivered the proper number to the woman, who regularly called at the end of the week for the cotton. The woman

persisted in her account; the children in theirs; and Manon would not retract her assertion. The poor woman gave up the point, but she declared, that she would the next time send her brother to make up the account, because he was *sharper* than herself, and would not be imposed upon so easily. The ensuing week the brother came, and he proved to be the very pawnbroker, to whom Manon formerly offered the stolen box: he knew her immediately; it was in vain that she attempted to puzzle him, and to persuade him, that she was not the same person. The man was clear and firm. Sister Frances could scarcely believe what she heard. Struck with horrour, the children shrunk back from Manon, and stood in silence. Madame de Fleury immediately wrote to the lady who had recommended this girl, and inquired into the truth of the pawnbroker's assertions. The lady, who had given Manon a false character, could not deny the facts, and could apologise for herself only by saying, that

"she believed the girl to be perfectly reformed, and that she hoped, under Madame de Fleury's judicious care, she would become an amiable and respectable woman."

Madame de Fleury, however, wisely judged, that the hazard of corrupting all her pupils should not be incurred for the slight chance of correcting one, whose bad habits were of such long standing. Manon was expelled from this happy little community—even Sister Frances, the most mild of human beings, could never think of the danger to which they had been exposed, without expressing indignation against the lady who recommended such a girl as a fit companion for her blameless and beloved pupils.

CHAPTER VII.

"Alas! regardless of their doom,
"The little victims play:
"No sense have they of ills to come,
"No care beyond to day."

GRAY.

GOOD legislators always attend to the habits, and what is called the genius, of the people they have to govern. From youth to age, the taste for whatever is called *une fête* pervades the whole French nation. Madame de Fleury availed herself judiciously of this powerful motive, and connected it with the feelings of affection more than with the passion for show. For instance, when any of her little people had done any thing particularly worthy of reward, she gave them leave to invite their parents to a *fête* pre-

pared for them by their children, assisted by the kindness of Sister Frances.

One day—itwas a holiday obtained by Victoire's good conduct—all the children prepared in their garden a little feast for their parents. Sister Frances spread the table with a bountiful hand, the happy fathers and mothers were waited upon by their children, and each in their turn heard with delight from the benevolent nun some instance of their daughter's improvement. Full of hope for the future, and of gratitude for the past, these honest people ate and talked, whilst in imagination they saw their children all prosperously and usefully settled in the world. They blessed Madame de Fleury in her absence, and they wished ardently for her presence.

"The sun is setting, and Madame de Fleury is not yet come," cried Victoire; "she said she would be here this evening —What can be the matter?"

"Nothing is the matter, you may be sure," said Babet, "but that she has for-

gotten us — she has so many things to think of."

"Yes; but I know she never forgets us," said Victoire; "and she loves so much to see us all happy together, that I am sure it must be something very extraordinary that detains her."

Babet laughed at Victoire's fears; but presently even she began to grow impatient, for they waited long after sun-set, expecting every moment, that Madame de Fleury would arrive. At last she appeared, but with a dejected countenance, which seemed to justify Victoire's foreboding. When she saw this festive company, each child sitting between her parents, and all at her entrance looking up with affectionate pleasure, a faint smile enlivened her countenance for a moment; but she did not speak to them with her usual ease. Her mind seemed preoccupied by some disagreeable business of importance. It appeared, that it had some connexion with them; for as she walked round the table with Sister Fran-

ces, she said with a voice and look of great tenderness—

"Poor children! how happy they are at this moment!—Heaven only knows, how soon they may be rendered, or may render themselves, miserable!"

None of the children could imagine what this meant, but their parents guessed, that they had some allusion to the state of public affairs. About this time some of those discontents had broken out, which preceded the terrible days of the revolution. As yet, most of the common people, who were honestly employed in earning their own living, neither understood what was going on, nor foresaw what was to happen. Many of their superiors were not in such happy ignorance—they had information of the intrigues, that were forming, and the more penetration they possessed, the more they feared the consequences of causes, which they could not control.—At the house of a great man, with whom she had dined this day, Madame de Fleury had heard alarming

news. Dreadful public disturbances, she saw, were inevitable; and whilst she trembled for the fate of all who were dear to her, these poor children had a share in her anxiety. She foresaw the temptations, the dangers, to which they must be exposed, whether they abandoned, or whether they abided by, the principles their education had instilled. She feared that the labour of years would perhaps be lost in an instant, or that her innocent pupils would fall victims even to their virtues.

Many of these young people were now of an age to understand and to govern themselves by reason; and with these she determined to use those preventive measures, which reason affords. Without meddling with politics, in which no amiable or sensible woman can wish to interfere, the influence of ladies in the higher ranks of life, may always be exerted with perfect propriety, and with essential advantage to the public, in conciliating the inferior classes of society, explaining to

them their duties and their interests, impressing upon the minds of the children of the poor sentiments of just subordination, and honest independence.— How happy would it have been for France, if women of fortune and abilities had always exerted their talents and activity in this manner, instead of wasting their powers in futile declamations, or in the intrigues of party!

CHAPTER VIII.

> "Ev'n now the devastation is begun,
> "And half the business of destruction done."
>
> GOLDSMITH.

MADAME DE FLEURY was not disappointed in her pupils. When the public disturbances began, these children were shocked by the horrible actions they saw. Instead of being seduced by bad example, they only showed anxiety to avoid companions of their own age, who were dishonest, idle, or profligate. Victoire's cousin Manon ridiculed these *absurd* principles, as she called them; and endeavoured to persuade Victoire, that she would be much happier if she *followed the fashion.*

"What! Victoire, still with your work-bag on your arm, and still going to school

with your little sister, though you are but a year younger than I am, I believe! —thirteen last birth-day, were not you? —Mon Dieu! Why how long do you intend to be a child? and why don't you leave that old nun, who keeps you in leading strings?—I assure you, nuns, and school-mistresses, and schools, and all that sort of things, are out of fashion now —we have abolished all that—we are to live a life of reason now—and all soon to be equal, I can tell you; let your Madame de Fleury look to that, and look to it yourself, for with all your wisdom, you might find yourself in the wrong box by sticking to her, and that side of the question.—Disengage yourself from her, I advise you, as soon as you can.—My dear Victoire! believe me, you may spell very well—but you know nothing of the rights of man, or the rights of woman."

"I do not pretend to know any thing of the rights of men, or the rights of women," cried Victoire; "but this I know, that I never can or will be ungrateful to

Madame de Fleury.—Disengage myself from her!—I am bound to her for ever, and I will abide by her to the last hour I breathe."

"Well, well! there is no occasion to be in a passion—I only speak as a friend, and I have no more time to reason with you; for I must go home, and get ready my dress for the ball to night.

"Manon, how can you afford to buy a dress for a ball?"

"As you might, if you had common sense, Victoire—only by being a *good citizen.* I and a party of us *denounced* a milliner and a confectioner in our neighbourhood, who were horrible aristocrats; and of their goods forfeited to the nation we had, as was our just share, such delicious *marangles*, and charming ribbands!—O Victoire! believe me, you will never get such things by going to school, or saying your prayers either. You may look with as much scorn and indignation as you please, but I advise you to let it alone, for all that is out of fashion,

and may moreover bring you into difficulties. Believe me, my dear Victoire! your head is not deep enough to understand these things—you know nothing of politics."

"But I know the difference between right and wrong, Manon: politics can never alter that, you know."

"Never alter that!—there you are quite mistaken," said Manon: "I cannot stay to convince you now—but this I can tell you, that I know secrets that you don't suspect."

"I do not wish to know any of your secrets, Manon," said Victoire proudly.

"Your pride may be humbled, Citoyenne Victoire, sooner than you expect," exclaimed Manon, who was now so provoked by her cousin's contempt, that she could not refrain from boasting of her political knowledge. "I can tell you, that your fine friends will in a few days not be able to protect you. The Abbé Tracassier is in love with a dear friend of mine, and I know all the secrets of state from her—

and I know what I know. Be as incredulous as you please, but you will see, that before this week is at an end, Monsieur de Fleury will be guillotined, and then what will become of you? Good morning, my proud cousin."

Shocked by what she had just heard, Victoire could scarcely believe, that Manon was in earnest; she resolved, however, to go immediately and communicate this intelligence, whether true or false, to Madame de Fleury. It agreed but too well with other circumstances, which alarmed this lady for the safety of her husband. A man of his abilities, integrity, and fortune, could not in such times hope to escape persecution. He was inclined to brave the danger; but his lady represented, that it would not be courage, but rashness and folly, to sacrifice his life to the villany of others, without probability or possibility of serving his country by his fall.

M. de Fleury, in consequence of these representations, and of Victoire's intelli-

gence, made his escape from Paris, and the very next day *placards* were put up in every street, offering a price for the head of Citoyen Fleury, *suspected of incivisme.*

Struck with terrour and astonishment at the sight of these *placards*, the children read them as they returned in the evening from school, and little Babet in the vehemence of her indignation mounted a lamplighter's ladder, and tore down one of the papers. This imprudent action did not pass unobserved; it was seen by one of the spies of Citoyen Tracassier, a man, who under the pretence of zeal *pour la chose publique*, gratified without scruple his private resentments, and his malevolent passions. In his former character of an abbé, and a man of wit, he had gained admittance into Madame de Fleury's society. There he attempted to dictate both as a literary and religious despot. Accidentally discovering, that Madame de Fleury had a little school for poor children; he thought proper to be

offended, because he had not been consulted respecting the regulations, and because he was not permitted, as he said, to take the charge of this little flock. He made many objections to Sister Frances, as being an improper person to have the spiritual guidance of these young people; but as he was unable to give any just reason for his dislike, Madame de Fleury persisted in her choice, and was at last obliged to assert, in opposition to the domineering abbé, her right to judge and decide in her own affairs. With seeming politeness, he begged ten thousand pardons for his conscientious interference. No more was said upon the subject; and as he did not totally withdraw from her society, till the revolution broke out, she did not suspect, that she had any thing to fear from his resentment. His manners and opinions changed suddenly with the times; the mask of religion was thrown off; and now, instead of objecting to Sister Frances as not being sufficiently strict and orthodox in her

tenets, he boldly declared, that a nun was not a fit person to be intrusted with the education of any of the young citizens — they should all be *des élèves de la patrie.* The abbè, become a member of the committee of public safety, denounced Madame de Fleury, in the strange jargon of the day, as "*the fosterer of a swarm of bad citizens, who were nourished in the anticivic prejudices de l'ancien régime, and fostered in the most detestable superstitions, in defiance of the law.*" He further observed, that he had good reason to believe, that some of these little *enemies to the constitution* had contrived and abetted M. de Fleury's escape. Of their having rejoiced at it in a most indecent manner he said he could produce irrefragable proof. The boy who saw Babet tear down the *placard* was produced, and solemnly examined, and the thoughtless action of this poor little girl was construed into a state crime of the most horrible nature. In a declamatory tone, Tracassier reminded his fellow citizens, that in the

ancient Grecian times of virtuous republicanism, times of which France ought to show herself emulous, an Athenian child was condemned to death for having made a plaything of a fragment of the gilding, that had fallen from a public statue. The orator, for the reward of his eloquence, obtained an order to seize every thing in Madame de Fleury's school-house, and to throw the nun into prison.

CHAPTER IX.

"Who now will guard bewilder'd youth
"Safe from the fierce assault of hostile rage?
"Such war can Virtue wage?"

At the very moment, when this order was going to be put into execution, Madame de Fleury was sitting in the midst of the children listening to Babet, who was reading Æsop's fable of *the old man and his sons.* Whilst her sister was reading, Victoire collected a number of twigs from the garden; she had just tied them together; and was going by Sister Frances's desire, to let her companions try if they could break the bundle, when the attention to the moral of the fable was interrupted by the entrance of an old woman, whose countenance expressed the utmost terrour and haste, to tell what she had not breath to utter. To Madame de

Fleury she was a stranger, but the children immediately recollected her to be the *chestnut woman*, to whom Babet had some years ago restored certain purloined chestnuts.

"Fly!" said she, the moment she had breath to speak, "Fly!—they are coming to seize every thing here—carry off what you can—make haste—make haste!—I came through a by-street. A man was eating chestnuts at my stall, and I saw him show one that was with him the order from Citoyen Tracassier.—They'll be here in five minutes—quick! quick!—You in particular," continued she, turning to the nun, "else you'll be in prison."

At these words, the children, who had clung round Sister Frances, loosed their hold, exclaiming, "Go! go quick, but where? where?—we will go with her."

"No, no!" said Madame de Fleury, "she shall come home with me—my carriage is at the door."

"Ma belle dame!" cried the chestnut woman, "your house is the worst place

she can go to—let her come to my cellar —the poorest cellar in these days is safer than the grandest palace."

So saying, she seized the nun with honest roughness, and hurried her away.—as soon as she was gone, the children ran different ways, each to collect some favourite thing, which they thought they could not leave behind. Victoire alone stood motionless beside Madame de Fleury; her whole thoughts absorbed by the fear, that her benefactress would be imprisoned.—" O madam! dear, dear Madame de Fleury, don't stay! don't stay!"

" O children, never mind these things."

" Don't stay, Madame, don't stay! I will stay with them—I will stay—do you go."

The children hearing these words, and recollecting Madame de Fleury's danger, abandoned all their little property, and instantly obeyed her orders to go home to their parents. Victoire at last saw Ma-

dame de Fleury safe in her carriage. The coachman drove off at a great rate, and a few minutes afterwards Tracassier's myrmidons arrived at the school-house. Great was their surprise, when they found only the poor children's little books, unfinished samplers, and half-hemmed handkerchiefs. They ran into the garden, to search for the nun. They were men of brutal habits, yet as they looked at every thing round them, which bespoke peace, innocence, and childish happiness, they could not help thinking it was a pity to destroy what *could do the nation no great harm after all.* They were even glad, that the nun had made her escape, since they were not answerable for it; and they returned to their employer, satisfied for once without doing any mischief: but Citizen Tracassier was of too vindictive a temper, to suffer the objects of his hatred thus to elude his vengeance. The next day Madame de Fleury was summoned before his tribunal, and order-

ed to give up the nun, against whom, as a suspected person, a decree of the law had been obtained.

Madame de Fleury refused to betray the innocent woman; the gentle firmness of this lady's answers to a brutal interrogatory was termed insolence; she was pronounced a refractory aristocrat, dangerous to the state; and an order was made out to seal up her effects, and to keep her a prisoner in her own house.

CHAPTER X.

"Alas! full oft on Guilt's victorious car
"The spoils of Virtue are in triumph borne,
"While the fair captive, mark'd with many a scar,
"In lone obscurity, oppress'd, forlorn,
"Resigns to tears her angel form."

BEATTIE.

A CLOSE prisoner in her own house, Madame de Fleury was now guarded by men suddenly become soldiers, and sprung from the dregs of the people; men of brutal manners, ferocious countenances, and more ferocious minds. They seemed to delight in the insolent display of their newly-acquired power. One of these men had formerly been convicted of some horrible crime, and had been sent to the galleys by M. de Fleury. Revenge actuated this wretch under the mask of patriotism, and he rejoiced in

seeing the wife of the man he hated a prisoner in his custody. Ignorant of the facts, his associates were ready to believe him in the right, and to join in the senseless cry against all who were their superiors in fortune, birth, and education. This unfortunate lady was forbidden all intercourse with her friends, and it was in vain she attempted to obtain from her jailors intelligence of what was passing in Paris.

"Tu verras—Tout va bièn—Ca ira:" were the only answers they deigned to make; frequently they continued smoking their pipes in obdurate silence. She occupied the back rooms of her house, because her guards apprehended, that she might from the front windows receive intelligence from her friends. One morning she was wakened by an unusual noise in the streets; and upon her inquiring the occasion of it, her guards told her she was welcome to go to the front windows, and satisfy her curiosity. She went, and saw an immense crowd of people

surrounding a guillotine, that had been erected the preceding night. Madame de Fleury started back with horrour—her guards burst into an inhuman laugh, and asked whether her curiosity was satisfied. She would have left the room, but it was now their pleasure to detain her, and to force her to continue the whole day in this apartment. When the guillotine began its work, they had even the barbarity to drag her to the window, repeating—

"It is there you ought to be!—It is there your husband ought to be!—You are too happy, that your husband is not there this moment.—But he will be there—the law will overtake him—he will be there in time—and you too!"

The mild fortitude of this innocent, benevolent woman made no impression upon these cruel men. When at night they saw her kneeling at her prayers, they taunted her with gross and impious mockery; and when she sunk to sleep they would waken her by their loud and

drunken orgies: if she remonstrated, they answered—

"The enemies of the constitution should have no rest."

Madame de Fleury was not an enemy to any human being; she had never interfered in politics; her life had been passed in domestic pleasures, or employed for the good of her fellow creatures. Even in this hour of personal danger she thought of others more than of herself; she thought of her husband, an exile in a foreign country, who might be reduced to the utmost distress, now that she was deprived of all means of remitting him money. She thought of her friends, who, she knew, would exert themselves to obtain her liberty, and whose zeal in her cause might involve them, and their families, in distress. She thought of the good Sister Frances, who had been exposed by her means to the unrelenting persecution of the malignant and powerful Tracassier. She thought of her poor little pupils, now thrown upon the world

without a protector. Whilst these ideas were revolving in her mind, one night, as she lay awake, she heard the door of her chamber open softly, and a soldier, one of her guards, with a light in his hand, entered: he came to the foot of her bed, and, as she started up, laid his finger upon his lips.

"Don't make the least noise," said he in a whisper; "those without are drunk, and asleep.—Don't you know me?—Don't you remember my face?"

"Not in the least, yet I have some recollection of your voice."

The man took off the bonnet-rouge—still she could not guess who he was.—"You never saw me in a uniform before, nor without a black face."

She looked again, and recollected the smith, to whom Maurice was bound apprentice, and remembered his patois accent.

"I remember you," said he, "at any rate; and your goodness to that poor girl the day her arm was broken, and all

your goodness to Maurice—but I've no time for talking of that now—get up, wrap this great coat round you—don't be in a hurry, but make no noise, and follow me."

She followed him, and he led her past the sleeping centinels, opened a back door into the garden, hurried her, almost carried her, across the garden, to a door at the furthest end of it, which opened into les Champs Elysées.—"La voila!" cried he, pushing her through the half-opened door.—"God be praised!" answered a voice, which Madame de Fleury knew to be Victoire's, whose arms were thrown round her with a transport of joy.

"Softly, she is not safe yet—wait till we get her home, Victoire," said another voice, which she knew to be that of Maurice.—He produced a dark lantern, and guided Madame de Fleury across the Champs Elysées, and across the bridge, and then through various by-streets, in perfect silence, till they arrived safely at the house where Victoire's mother lodged,

and went up those very stairs, which she had ascended in such different circumstances several years before. The mother, who was sitting up waiting most anxiously for the return of her children, clasped her hands in an ecstasy, when she saw them return with Madame de Fleury.

"Welcome, Madame! Welcome, dear Madame! but who would have thought of seeing you here, in such a way.—Let her rest herself—let her rest, she is quite overcome.—Here Miladi, on this poor bed can you sleep?"—"The very same bed you laid me upon the day my arm was broken," said Victoire.

"Ay, Lord bless her!" said the mother, "and though it's seven good years ago, it seemed but yesterday, that I saw her sitting on that bed, beside my poor child, looking like an angel. But let her rest, let her rest, we'll not say a word more, only God bless her! thank Heaven, she's safe with us at last!"

Madame de Fleury expressed unwill-

ingness to stay with these good people, lest she should expose them to danger; but they begged most earnestly, that she would remain with them without scruple.

"Surely, Madame," said the mother, "you must think that we have some remembrance of all you have done for us, and some touch of gratidude."—"And surely, Madame, you can trust us, I hope," said Maurice.—"And surely you are not too proud, to let us do something for you. The lion was not too proud to be served by the poor little mouse," said Victoire. "As to danger for us," continued she, "there can be none, for Maurice and I have contrived a hiding place for you, Madame, that can never be found out—let them come spying here as often as they please, they will never find her out, will they Maurice?—Look, Madame, into this lumber room, you see it seems to be quite full of wood for firing; well, if you creep in behind, there's a place behind where you can lie quite snug, and here's a trap-door into the loft that

nobody ever would think of—for we have hung these old things from the top of it, and who could guess it was a trap-door?—So you see, dear Madame, you may sleep in peace here, and never fear for us."

Though but a girl of fourteen, Victoire showed at this time all the sense and prudence of a woman of thirty. Gratitude seemed at once to develope all the powers of her mind. It was she and Maurice, who had prevailed upon the smith to effect Madame de Fleury's escape from her own house. She had invented, she had foreseen, she had arranged every thing; she had scarcely rested night or day since the imprisonment of her benefactress; and now that her exertions had fully succeeded, her joy seemed to raise her above all feeling of fatigue; she looked as fresh, and moved as briskly, her mother said, as if she was preparing to go to a ball.

"Ah! my child," said she, "your cousin Manon, who goes to those balls

every night, was never so happy as you are this minute."

But Victoire's happiness was not of long continuance, for the next day they were alarmed by intelligence, that Tracassier was enraged beyond measure at Madame de Fleury's escape, that all his emissaries were at work to discover her present hiding-place, that the houses of all the parents and relations of her pupils were to be searched, and that the most severe denunciations were issued against all by whom she should be harboured. Manon was the person who gave this intelligence, but not with any benevolent design; she first came to see Victoire, to display her own consequence; and to terrify her, she related all she knew from a soldier's wife, who was M. Tracassier's mistress. Victoire had sufficient command over herself to conceal from the inquisitive eyes of Manon the agitation of her heart; she had also the prudence not to let any one of her companions into her secret, though, when she saw their

anxiety, she was much tempted to relieve them, by the assurance that Madame de Fleury was in safety. All the day was passed in apprehension—Madame de Fleury never stirred from her place of concealment: as the evening and the hour of the domiciliary visits approached, Victoire and Maurice were alarmed by an unforeseen difficulty. Their mother, whose health had been broken by hard work, in vain endeavoured to suppress her terrour at the thoughts of this domiciliary visit; she repeated incessantly, that she knew they should all be discovered, and that her children would be dragged to the guillotine before her face. She was in such a distracted state, that they dreaded she would, the moment she saw the soldiers, reveal all she knew.

"If they question me, I shall not know what to answer," cried the terrified woman. "What can I say?—What can I do?"

Reasoning, entreaties, all were vain; she was not in a condition to understand,

or even to listen, to any thing that was said. In this situation they were, when the domiciliary visitors arrived — they heard the noise of the soldiers' feet on the stairs—the poor woman sprang from the arms of her children, but at the moment the door was opened, and she saw the glittering of the bayonets, she fell at full length in a swoon on the floor—fortunately before she had power to utter a syllable. The people of the house knew, and said, that she was subject to fits on any sudden alarm, so that her being affected in this manner did not appear surprising. They threw her on a bed, whilst they proceeded to search the house; her children staid with her; and, wholly occupied in attending to her, they were not exposed to the danger of betraying their anxiety about Madame de Fleury. They trembled, however, from head to foot, when they heard one of the soldiers swear that all the wood in the lumber-room must be pulled out, and that he would not leave the house till every stick was

moved. The sound of each log, as it was thrown out, was heard by Victoire; her brother was now summoned to assist. How great was his terrour, when one of the searchers looked up to the roof, as if expecting to find a trap-door! fortunately, however, he did not discover it. Maurice, who had seized the light, contrived to throw the shadows so as to deceive the eye. The soldiers at length retreated, and with inexpressible satisfaction Maurice lighted them down stairs, and saw them fairly out of the house. For some minutes after they were in safety, the terrified mother, who had recovered her senses, could scarcely believe that the danger was over. She embraced her children by turns with wild transport; and with tears begged Madame de Fleury to forgive her cowardice, and not to attribute it to ingratitude, or to suspect that she had a bad heart. She protested, that she was now become so courageous, since she found that she had gone through this trial successfully, and since she was

sure that the hiding-place was really so secure, that she should never be alarmed at any domiciliary visit in future. Madame de Fleury, however, did not think it either just or expedient to put her resolution to the trial. She determined to leave Paris; and, if possible, to make her escape from France. The master of one of the Paris diligences was brother to François her footman: he was ready to assist her at all hazards, and to convey her safely to Bourdeaux, if she could disguise herself properly; and if she could obtain a pass from any friend under a feigned name.

Victoire—the indefatigable Victoire—recollected, that her friend Annette had an aunt, who was nearly of Madame de Fleury's size, who had just obtained a pass to go to Bourdeaux to visit some of her relations. The pass was willingly given up to Madame de Fleury, and upon reading it over it was found to answer tolerably well—the colour of the eyes and

hair at least would do; though the words *un nez gros* were not precisely descriptive of this lady's. Annette's mother, who had always worn the provincial dress of Auvergne, furnished the high *cornette*, stiff stays, boddice, &c., and equipped in these, Madame de Fleury was so admirably well disguised, that even Victoire declared she should scarcely have known her. Money, that most necessary passport in all countries, was still wanting: as seals had been put upon all Madame de Fleury's effects the day she had been first imprisoned in her own house, she could not save even her jewels. She had, however, one ring on her finger, of some value. How to dispose of it without exciting suspicion was the difficulty. Babet, who was resolved to have her share in assisting her benefactress, proposed to carry the ring to a *colporteur*—a pedlar, or sort of travelling jeweller, who had come to lay in a stock of hardware at Paris: he was related to one of Madame de Fleury's little

pupils, and readily disposed of the ring for her; she obtained at least two thirds of its value—a great deal in those times.

The proofs of integrity, attachment, and gratitude, which she received in these days of peril, from those whom she had obliged in her prosperity, touched her generous heart so much, that she has often since declared, she could not regret having been reduced to distress. Before she quitted Paris, she wrote letters to her friends, recommending her pupils to their protection; she left these letters in the care of Victoire, who to the last moment followed her with anxious affection. She would have followed her benefactress into exile, but that she was prevented by duty and affection from leaving her mother, who was in declining health.

Madame de Fleury successfully made her escape from Paris. Some of the municipal officers in the towns, through which she passed on her road, were as severe as their ignorance would permit in

scrutinising her passport. It seldom happened, that more than one of these petty committees of public safety could read. One usually spelled out the passport as well as he could, whilst the others smoked their pipes, and from time to time held a light up to the lady's face, to examine whether it agreed with the description.

"Mais toi! tu n'as pas le nez gros!" said one of her judges to her.—"Son nez est assez gros, et c'est moi qui le dit," said another. The question was put to the vote, and the man who had asserted what was contrary to the evidence of his senses was so vehement in supporting his opinion, that it was carried in spite of all that could be said against it. Madame de Fleury was suffered to proceed on her journey. She reached Bourdeaux in safety. Her husband's friends—the good have always friends in adversity—her husband's friends exerted themselves for her with the most prudent zeal. She was

soon provided with a sum of money sufficient for her support for some time in England; and she safely reached that free and happy country, which has been the refuge of so many illustrious exiles.

CHAPTER XI.

"Così rozzo diamante appena splende
"Dalla rupe natìa quand 'esce fuora
"E a poco a poco lucido se rende
"Sotto l'attenta che lo lavora."

MADAME DE FLEURY joined her husband, who was in London, and they both lived in the most retired and frugal manner. They had too much of the pride of independence to become burdensome to their generous English friends. Notwithstanding the variety of difficulties they had to encounter, and the number of daily privations to which they were forced to submit, yet they were happy—in a tranquil conscience, in their mutual affection, and the attachment of many poor but grateful friends. A few months after she came to England, Madame de Fleury received, by a private hand, a packet of

letters from her little pupils. Each of them, even the youngest, who had but just begun to learn joining hand, would write a few lines in this packet.

In various hands, of various sizes, the changes were rung upon these simple words:

"My dear Madame de Fleury,

"I love you — I wish you were here again—I will be *very very* good whilst you are away—If you stay away ever so long, I shall never forget you, nor your goodness—but I hope you will soon be able to come back, and this is what I pray for every night—Sister Frances says, I may tell you that I am very good, and Victoire thinks so too."

This was the substance of several of their little letters. Victoire's contained rather more information.

"You will be glad to *learn*, that dear Sister Frances is safe, and that the good chestnut woman, in whose cellar she took

refuge, did not get into any difficulty. After you were gone, M. T—— said, that he did not think it worth while to pursue her, as it was only you he wanted to humble. Manon, who has, I do not know how, means of knowing, told me this. Sister Frances is now with her abbess, who, as well as every body else that knows her, is very fond of her. What was a convent, is no longer a convent: the nuns are turned out of it. Sister Frances's health is not so good as it used to be, though she never complains; I am sure she suffers much; she has never been the same person since that day when we were driven from our happy school-room. It is all destroyed—the garden and every thing. It is now a dismal sight. Your absence also afflicts Sister Frances much, and she is in great anxiety about all of us. She has the six little ones with her every day, in her own apartment, and goes on teaching them, as she used to do. We six eldest go to see her as often as we can. I should have begun,

my dear Madame de Fleury, by telling you, that, the day after you left Paris, I went to deliver all the letters you were so very kind to write for us in the midst of your hurry. Your friends have been exceedingly good to us, and have placed us all. Rose is with Madame la Grace, your mantua-maker, who says she is handier and more expert at cutting out, than girls she has had these three years. Marianne is in the service of Madame de V——, who has lost a great part of her large fortune, and cannot afford to keep her former waiting-maid. Madame de V—— is well pleased with Marianne, and bids me tell you that she thanks you for her. Indeed, Marianne, though she is only fourteen, can do every thing her lady wants. Susanne is with a confectioner; she gave Sister Frances a box of *bonbons* of her own making this morning; and Sister Frances, who is a judge, says they are excellent: she only wishes you could taste them. Annette and I (thanks to your kindness!) are in the

same service, with Madame Feuillot the *brodeuse*, to whom you recommended us: she is not discontented with our work, and indeed sent a very civil message yesterday to Sister Frances on this subject; but I believe it is too flattering for me to repeat in this letter. We shall do our best to give her satisfaction. She is glad to find, that we can write tolerably, and that we can make out bills and keep accounts; this being particularly convenient to her at present, as the young man she had in the shop is become an *orator*, and good for nothing but *la chose publique*: her son, who could have supplied his place, is ill; and Madame Feuillot herself, not having had, as she says, the advantage of such a good education as we have been blessed with, writes but badly. and knows nothing of arithmetic.—Dear Madame de Fleury, how much, how very much we are obliged to you! We feel it every day more and more: in these times, what would have become of us, if we could do nothing useful? Who *would*,

who *could*, be burdened with us? Dear Madame, we owe every thing to you— and we can do nothing, not the least thing for you!—My mother is still in bad health, and I fear will never recover: Babet is with her always, and Sister Frances is very good to her. My brother Maurice is now so good a workman, that he earns a louis a week. He is very steady to his business, and never goes to the revolutionary meetings, though once he had a great mind to be an orator of the people, but never since the day that you explained to him, that he knew nothing about equality and the rights of men, &c. —How could I forget to tell you, that his master the smith, who was one of your guards, and who assisted you to escape, has returned without suspicion to his former trade? and he declares, that he will never more meddle with public affairs. I gave him the money you left with me for him. He is very kind to my brother — yesterday mended for Annette's mistress the lock of an English writing

desk, and he mended it so astonishingly well, that an English gentleman who saw it could not believe the work was done by a Frenchman, so my brother was sent for, to prove it, and they were forced to believe it. To day he has more work than he can finish this twelvemonth—all this we owe to you—I shall never forget the day when you promised, that you would grant my brother's wish to be apprenticed to this smith, if I was not in a passion for a month—that cured me of being so passionate.

"Dear Madame de Fleury, I have written you too long a letter, and not so well as I can write when I am not in a hurry, but I wanted to tell you every thing at once, because, may be I shall not for a long time have so safe an opportunity of sending a letter to you.

VICTOIRE."

Several months elapsed before Madame de Fleury received another letter from Victoire: it was short, and evidently writ-

ten in great distress of mind. It contained an account of her mother's death. She was now left at the early age of sixteen an orphan. Madame Feuillot the *brodeuse*, with whom she lived, added a few lines to her letter, penned with difficulty and strangely spelled, but expressive of her being highly pleased with both the girls recommended to her by Madame de Fleury, especially Victoire, who she said was such a treasure to her, that she would not part with her on any account, and should consider her as a daughter. "I tell her not to grieve so much; for though she has lost one mother, she has gained another for herself, who will always love her; and besides, she is so useful, and in so many ways with her pen and her needle, in accounts, and every thing that is wanted in a family or a shop, she can never want employment or friends in the worst times; and none can be worse than these; especially for such pretty girls as she is, who have all their heads turned, and are taught to consider

nothing a sin that used to be sins. Many gentlemen, who come to our shop, have found out that Victoire is very handsome, and tell her so; but she is so modest and prudent, that I am not afraid for her. I could tell you, Madame, a good anecdote on this subject, but my paper will not allow, and besides my writing is so difficult."

Above a year elapsed before Madame de Fleury received another letter from Victoire: this was in a parcel, of which an emigrant took charge: it contained a variety of little offerings from her pupils, instances of their ingenuity, their industry, and their affection: the last thing in the packet was a small purse labelled in this manner,

"*Savings from our wages and earnings, for her who taught us all we know.*"

CHAPTER XII.

"Dans sa pompe élégante, admirez Chantilly,
"De héros en héros, d'âge en âge, embelli."

DE LILLE.

THE health of the good Sister Frances, which had suffered much from the shock her mind received at the commencement of the revolution, declined so rapidly in the course of the two succeeding years, that she was obliged to leave Paris, and she retired to a little village in the neighbourhood of Chantilly. She chose this situation, because here she was within a morning's walk of Madame de Fleury's country seat. The Château de Fleury had not yet been seized as national property, nor had it suffered from the attacks of the mob, though it was in a perilous situation, within view of the high

road to Paris. The Parisian populace had not yet extended their outrages to this distance from the city, and the poor people who lived on the estate of Fleury, attached from habit, principle, and gratitude to their lord, were not disposed to take advantage of the disorder of the times, to injure the property of those from whom they had all their lives received favours and protection. A faithful old steward had the care of the castle and the grounds. Sister Frances was impatient to talk to him, and to visit the castle, which she had never seen; but for some days after her arrival in the village, she was so much fatigued and so weak, that she could not attempt so long a walk. Victoire had obtained permission from her mistress to accompany the nun for a few days to the country, as Annette undertook to do all the business of the shop during the absence of her companion. Victoire was fully as eager as Sister Frances to see the faithful steward and the Château de Fleury, and the morning was

now fixed for their walk; but in the middle of the night they were wakened by the shouts of a mob, who had just entered the village fresh from the destruction of a neighbouring castle. The nun and Victoire listened; but, in the midst of the horrid yells of joy, no human voice, no intelligible word, could be distinguished; they looked through a chink in the window-shutter, and they saw the street below filled with a crowd of men, whose countenances were by turns illuminated by the glare of the torches which they brandished.

"Good Heavens!" whispered the nun to Victoire; "I should know the face of that man who is loading his musket—the very man whom I nursed ten years ago, when he was dying of a jail fever!"

This man, who stood in the midst of the crowd, taller by the head than the others, seemed to be the leader of the party: they were disputing, whether they should proceed further, spend the remainder of the night in the village alehouse,

or return to Paris. Their leader ordered spirits to be distributed to his associates, and exhorted them in a loud voice to proceed in their glorious work. Tossing his firebrand over his head, he declared that he would never return to Paris till he had razed to the ground the Château de Fleury. At these words, Victoire, forgetful of all personal danger, ran out into the midst of the mob, pressed her way up to the leader of these ruffians, caught him by the arm, exclaiming—

"You will not touch a stone in the Château de Fleury—I have my reasons—I say you will not suffer a stone in the Château de Fleury to be touched."

"And why not?" cried the man turning astonished; "and who are you, that I should listen to you?"

"No matter who I am," said Victoire; "follow me, and I will show you one to whom you will not refuse to listen.—Here!—here she is," continued Victoire, pointing to the nun, who had followed her in amazement; "here is one to whom

you will listen—yes, look at her well: hold the light to her face."

The nun, in a supplicating attitude, stood in speechless expectation.

"Ay, I see you have gratitude, I know you will have mercy," cried Victoire, watching the workings in the countenance of the man. "You will save the Château de Fleury, for her sake—who saved your life."

"I will," cried this astonished chief of a mob, fired with sudden generosity; "By my faith you are a brave girl, and a fine girl, and know how to speak to the heart, and in the right moment.—Friends, citizens! this nun, though she is a nun, she is good for something. When I lay dying of a fever, and not a soul else to help me, she came and gave me medicines and food—in short, I owe my life to her. 'Tis ten years ago, but I remember it well; and now it is our turn to rule, and she shall be paid as she deserves. Not a stone of the Château de Fleury shall be touched!"

With loud acclamations, the mob joined in the generous enthusiasm of the moment, and followed their leader peaceably out of the village. All this passed with such rapidity, as scarcely to leave the impression of reality upon the mind. As soon as the sun rose in the morning, Victoire looked out for the turrets of the Château de Fleury, and she saw that they were safe—safe in the midst of the surrounding devastations. Nothing remained of the superb palace of Chantilly, but the white arches of its foundation!

CHAPTER XIII.

"When thy last breath, ere nature sunk to rest,
"Thy meek submission to thy God express'd;
"When thy last look, ere thought and feeling fled,
"A mingled gleam of hope and triumph shed,
"What to thy soul its glad assurance gave—
"Its hope in death, its triumph o'er the grave!
"The sweet remembrance of unblemish'd youth,
"Th' inspiring voice of innocence and truth!"

ROGERS.

THE good Sister Frances, though she had scarcely recovered from the shock of the preceding night, accompanied Victoire to the Château de Fleury. The gates were opened for them by the old steward and his son Basile, who welcomed them with all the eagerness with which people welcome friends in time of adversity. The old man showed them the place; and through every apartment of the ca-

stle went on, talking of former times, and with narrative fondness told anecdotes of his dear master and mistress. Here his lady used to sit and read—here was the table at which she wrote—this was the sofa on which she and the ladies sat the very last day she was at the castle, at the open windows of the hall, whilst all the tenants and people of the village were dancing on the green.

"Ay, those were happy times," said the old man; "but they will never return."

"Never! O do not say so," cried Victoire.

"Never during my life, at least," said the nun in a low voice, and with a look of resignation.

Basile, as he wiped the tears from his eyes, happened to strike his arm against the cords of Madame de Fleury's harp, and the sound echoed through the room.

"Before this year is at an end," cried Victoire, "perhaps that harp will be struck again in this castle by Madame

de Fleury herself. Last night we could hardly have hoped to see this castle standing this morning, and yet it is safe —not a stone touched! O we shall all live, I hope, to see better times!"

Sister Frances smiled, for she would not depress Victoire's enthusiastic hope: to please her, the good nun added, that she felt better this morning than she had felt for months, and Victoire was happier than she had been since Madame de Fleury left France. But, alas! it was only a transient gleam of happiness. Sister Frances relapsed, and declined so rapidly, that even Victoire, whose mind was almost always disposed to hope, despaired of her recovery. With placid resignation, or rather with mild confidence, this innocent and benevolent creature met the approach of death. She seemed attached to Earth only by affection for those, whom she was to leave in this world. Two of the youngest of the children, who had formerly been placed under her care, and who

were not yet able to earn their own subsistence, she kept with her, and in the last days of her life she continued her instructions to them with the fond solicitude of a parent. Her father confessor, an excellent man, who never even in these dangerous times shrunk from his duty, came to attend Sister Frances in her last moments, and relieved her mind from all anxiety, by promising to place the two little children with the abbess of her convent, who would to the utmost of her power protect and provide for them suitably. Satisfied by this promise, the good Sister Frances smiled upon Victoire, who stood beside her bed, and with that smile upon her countenance expired.———It was some time before the little children seemed to comprehend, or to believe, that Sister Frances was dead: they had never before seen any one die, they had no idea what it was to die, and their first feeling was astonishment: they did not seem to understand why

Victoire wept. But the next day, when no Sister Frances spoke to them, when every hour they missed some accustomed kindness from her, when presently they saw the preparations for her funeral, when they heard that she was to be buried in the earth, and that they should never see her more, they could neither play nor eat, but sat in a corner holding each other's hands, and watching every thing that was done for the dead by Victoire.

In those times the funeral of a nun with a priest attending would not have been permitted by the populace. It was therefore performed as secretly as possible: in the middle of the night the coffin was carried to the burial place of the Fleury family: the old steward, his son Basile, Victoire, and the good father confessor, were the only persons present. It is necessary to mention this, because the facts were afterwards misrepresented.

CHAPTER XIV.

"The character is lost!
"Her head adorn'd with lappets, pinn'd aloft,
"And ribbands streaming gay, superbly rais'd,
"Indebted to some smart wig-weaver's hand,
"For more than half the tresses it sustains."

COWPER.

UPON her return to Paris, Victoire felt melancholy; but she exerted herself as much as possible in her usual occupation; finding that employment and the consciousness of doing her duty were the best remedies for sorrow.

One day as she was busy settling Madame Feuillot's accounts, a servant came into the shop, and inquired for Mademoiselle Victoire: he presented her a note, which she found rather difficult to deci-

pher. It was signed by her cousin Manon, who desired to see Victoire at her hotel. " *Her hotel !*" repeated Victoire with astonishment. The servant assured her, that one of the finest hotels in Paris belonged to his lady, and that he was commissioned to show her the way to it. Victoire found her cousin in a magnificent house, which had formerly belonged to the Prince de ———. Manon, dressed in the disgusting, indecent extreme of the mode, was seated under a richly fringed canopy. She burst into a loud laugh, as Victoire entered.

" You look just as much astonished as I expected," cried she. " Great changes have happened since I saw you last—I always told you, Victoire, I knew the world better than you did. What has come of all your schooling, and your mighty goodness, and your gratitude truly?—Your patroness is banished and a beggar, and you a drudge in the shop of a *brodeuse*, who makes you work your fingers to the bone, no doubt.—Now you

shall see the difference. Let me show you my house, you know it was formerly the hotel of the Prince de ——————, he that was guillotined the other day; but you know nothing, for you have been out of Paris this month, I understand. Then I must tell you, that my friend Villeneuf has acquired an immense fortune by assignats, made in the course of a fortnight—I say an immense fortune! and has bought this fine house—Now do you begin to understand?"

"I do not clearly know whom you mean by your friend Villeneuf," said Victoire.

"The hair-dresser, who lived in our street," said Manon; "he became a great patriot, you know, and orator; and what with his eloquence, and his luck in dealing in assignats, he has made his fortune and mine."

"And yours? then he is your husband."

"That does not follow . . . . . that is not necessary—but do not look so shock-

ed—every body goes on the same way now; besides, I had no other resource—I must have starved—I could not earn my bread as you do. Besides, I was too delicate for hard work of any sort—and besides . . . . . but come, let me show you my house—you have no idea how fine it is."

With anxious ostentation Manon displayed all her riches, to excite Victoire's envy.

"Confess, Victoire," said she at last, "that you think me the happiest person you have ever known.——You do not answer; whom did you ever know that was happier?"

"Sister Frances, who died last week, appeared to be much happier," said Victoire.

"The poor nun!" said Manon disdainfully. "Well, and whom do you think the next happiest?"

"Madame de Fleury."

"An exile and a beggar!—O! you are jesting now, Victoire—or—envious.

With that sanctified face, Citoyenne (perhaps I should say Mademoiselle) Victoire, you would be delighted to change places with me this instant.—Come, you shall stay with me a week to try how you like it."

"Excuse me," said Victoire firmly, "I cannot stay with you, Manon—you have chosen one way of life, and I another—quite another. I do not repent my choice.—May you never repent yours!—Farewell!"

"Bless me! what airs! and with what dignity she looks! Repent of my choice!—a likely thing, truly. Am not I at the top of the wheel?"

"And may not the wheel turn?" said Victoire.

"Perhaps it may," said Manon; "but till it does, I will enjoy myself. Since you are of a different humour, return to Madame Feuillot, and *figure* upon cambric and muslin, and make out bills, and nurse old nuns, all the days of your life. You will never persuade me, however,

that you would not change places with me if you could. Stay till you are tried, Mademoiselle Victoire.—Who was ever in love with you, or your virtues?—Stay till you are tried."

CHAPTER XV.

"But beauty, like the fair hesperian tree,
"Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard
"Of dragon, watch with unenchanted eye
"To save her blossoms, or defend her fruit."

MILTON.

THE trial was nearer than either Manon or Victoire expected. — Manon had scarcely pronounced the last words, when the cidevant hairdresser burst into the room, accompanied by several of his political associates, who met to consult measures for the good of the nation. Among these patriots was the Abbé Tracassier.

"Who is that pretty girl, who is with you, Manon?" whispered he; "a friend of yours, I hope?"

Victoire left the room immediately, but not before the profligate abbé had

seen enough to make him wish to see more of her. The next day he went to Madame Feuillot's, under pretence of buying some embroidered handkerchiefs; he paid Victoire a profusion of extravagant compliments, which made no impression upon her innocent heart, and which appeared ridiculous to her plain good sense. She did not know who he was, nor did Madame Feuillot; for though she had often heard of the abbé, yet she had never seen him. Several succeeding days he returned, and addressed himself to Victoire, each time with increasing freedom. Madame Feuillot, who had the greatest confidence in her, left her entirely to her own discretion. Victoire begged her friend Annette to do the business of the shop, and staid at work in the back parlour. Tracassier was much disappointed by her absence, but as he thought no great ceremony necessary in his proceedings, he made his name known in a haughty manner to Madame Feuillot, and desired that he

might be admitted into the back parlour, as he had something of consequence to say to Mademoiselle Victoire in private. Our readers will not require to have a detailed account of this tête-à-tête; it is sufficient to say, that the disappointed and exasperated abbé left the house muttering imprecations. The next morning a note came to Victoire, apparently from Manon; it was directed by her, but the inside was written by an unknown hand, and contained these words.

"You are a charming but incomprehensible girl—since you do not like compliments, you shall not be addressed with empty flattery. It is in the power of the person, who dictates this, not only to make you as rich and great as your cousin Manon, but also to restore to fortune and to their country the friends for whom you are most interested. Their fate as well as your own is in your power—if you send a favourable answer to this

note, the persons alluded to will, to morrow, be struck from the list of emigrants, and reinstated in their former possessions. If your answer is decidedly unfavourable, the return of your friends to France will be thenceforward impracticable, and their château, as well as their house in Paris, will be declared national property, and sold without delay to the highest bidder. To you, who have as much understanding as beauty, it is unnecessary to say more. Consult your heart, charming Victoire! be happy, and make others happy. This moment is decisive of your fate and of theirs, for you have to answer a man of a most decided character."

Victoire's answer was as follows:—

"My friends would not, I am sure, accept of their fortune, or consent to return to their country, upon the conditions proposed; therefore I have no merit in rejecting them."

Victoire had early acquired good principles, and that plain steady good sense, which goes straight to its object, without being dazzled or imposed upon by sophistry. She was unacquainted with the refinements of sentiment, but she distinctly knew right from wrong, and had sufficient resolution to abide by the right. —Perhaps many romantic heroines might have thought it a generous self-devotion, to have become in similar circumstances the mistress of Tracassier; and those, who are skilled "to make the worse appear the better cause," might have made such an act of heroism the foundation of an interesting, or at least a fashionable novel. —Poor Victoire had not received an education sufficiently refined to enable her to understand these mysteries of sentiment. She was even simple enough to flatter herself, that this libertine patriot would not fulfil his threats, and that these had been made only with a view to terrify her into compliance. In this opinion, however, she found herself mistaken.

M. Tracassier was indeed a man of the most decided character, if this term may properly be applied to those, who act uniformly in consequence of their ruling passion. The Château de Fleury was seized as national property. Victoire heard this bad news from the old steward, who was turned out of the castle along with his son, the very day after her rejection of the proposed conditions.

"I could not have believed, that any human creature could be so wicked!" exclaimed Victoire, glowing with indignation; but indignation gave way to sorrow.

"And the Château de Fleury is really seized?—and you, good old man, are turned out of the place where you were born?—and you, too, Basile?—and Madame de Fleury will never come back again!—and perhaps she may be put into prison in a foreign country, and may die for want . . . . . and I might have prevented all this!"

Unable to shed a tear, Victoire stood in silent consternation, whilst Annette explained to the good steward and his son the whole transaction. Basile, who was naturally of an impetuous temper, was so transported with indignation, that he would have gone instantly with the note from Tracassier to *denounce* him before the whole national convention, if he had not been restrained by his more prudent father. The old steward represented to him, that as the note was neither signed nor written by the hand of Tracassier, no proof could be brought home to him, and the attempt to convict one of so powerful a party would only bring certain destruction upon the accusers. Besides, such was at this time the general depravity of manners, that numbers would keep the guilty in countenance. There was no crime, which the mask of patriotism could not cover.

"There is one comfort we have in our misfortunes, which these men can never have," said the old man; "when their

downfall comes, and come it will most certainly, they will not feel as we do, INNOCENT.—Victoire, look up! and do not give way to despair — all will yet be well."

"At all events, you have done what is right, so do not reproach yourself," said Basile. "Every body — I mean every body who is good for any thing—must respect, admire, and love you, Victoire."

CHAPTER XVI.

"Ne mal cio che v'annoia;
"Quello e vero gioire
"Che nasce da virtu dopo il soffrire."

BASILE had not seen, without emotion, the various instances of goodness, which Victoire showed during the illness of Sister Frances. Her conduct towards M. Tracassier increased his esteem and attachment; but he forbore to declare his affection, because he could not consistently with prudence, or with gratitude to his father, think of marrying, now that he was not able to maintain a wife and family. The honest earnings of many years of service had been wrested from the old steward at the time the Château de Fleury was seized; and he now depended on the industry of his son for the daily support of his age. His dependence

was just, and not likely to be disappointed, for he had given his son an education suitable to his condition in life. Basile was an exact arithmetician, could write an excellent hand, and was a ready draughtsman and surveyor. To bring these useful talents into action, and to find employment for them, with men by whom they would be honestly rewarded, was the only difficulty — a difficulty which Victoire's brother Maurice soon removed. His reputation as a smith had introduced him, among his many customers, to a gentleman of worth and scientific knowledge, who was at this time employed to make models and plans of all the fortified places in Europe; he was in want of a good clerk and draughtsman, of whose integrity he could be secure. Maurice mentioned his friend Basile; and upon inquiry into his character, and upon trial of his abilities, he was found suited to the place, and was accepted. By his well-earned salary, he supported himself and his father; and

began, with the sanguine hopes of a young man, to flatter himself, that he should soon be rich enough to marry, and that then he might declare his attachment to Victoire. Notwithstanding all his boasted prudence, he had betrayed sufficient symptoms of his passion, to have rendered a declaration unnecessary to any clear-sighted observer; but Victoire was not thinking of conquests, she was wholly occupied with a scheme of earning a certain sum of money for her benefactress, who was now as she feared in want. All Madame de Fleury's former pupils contributed their share to the common stock; and the mantua-maker, the confectioner, the servants of different sorts, who had been educated at her school, had laid by, during the years of her banishment, an annual portion of their wages and savings: with the sum which Victoire now added to the fund, it amounted to ten thousand livres. The person who undertook to carry this money to Madame de Fleury was Fran-

çois, her former footman, who had procured a pass to go to England as a hairdresser. The night before he set out was a happy night for Victoire, as all her companions met, by Madame Feuillot's invitation, at her house; and after tea they had the pleasure of packing up the little box in which each, beside the money, sent some token of their gratitude, and some proof of their ingenuity. They would with all their hearts have sent twice as many *souvenirs* as François could carry.

"D'abord c'est impossible!" cried he, when he saw the box, that was prepared for him to carry to England: but his good-nature was unable to resist the entreaties of each to have her offering carried, "which would take up no room."

He departed—arrived safe in England—found out Madame de Fleury, who was in real distress, in obscure lodgings at Richmond. He delivered faithfully the money, and all the presents of which he had taken charge; but the person to

whom she trusted a letter, in answer to Victoire, was not so punctual, or was more unlucky; for the letter never reached Victoire, and she and her companions were long uncertain whether their little treasure had been received.—They still continued, however, with indefatigable gratitude, to lay by a portion of their earnings for their benefactress, and the pleasure they had in this perseverance made them more than amends for the loss of the little amusements and privations, to which they submitted, in consequence of their resolution.

In the mean time Basile, going on steadily with his employments, advanced every day in the favour of his master, and his salary was increased in proportion to his abilities and industry, so that he thought he could now, without any imprudence, marry. He consulted his father, who approved of his choice; he consulted Maurice as to the probability of his being accepted by Victoire; and encouraged by both his father and his

friend, he was upon the eve of addressing himself to Victoire, when he was prevented by a new and unforeseen misfortune. His father was taken up, by an emissary of Tracassier's, and brought before one of their revolutionary committees, where he was accused of various acts of incivisme. Among other things equally criminal, it was proved, that one Sunday, when he went to see la petite Trianon, then a public house, he exclaimed — "C'est ici que la canaille danse, et que les honnêtes gens pleurent!"

Basile was present at this mock examination of his father—he saw him on the point of being dragged to prison—when a hint was given, that he might save his father by enlisting immediately, and going with the army out of France. Victoire was full in Basile's recollection —but there was no other means of saving his father. He enlisted, and in twenty-four hours left Paris.

What appear to be the most unfortunate circumstances of life, often prove

ultimately the most advantageous. Indeed, those who have knowledge, activity, and integrity, can convert the apparent blanks in the lottery of fortune into prizes. Basile was recommended to his commanding officer by the gentleman, who had lately employed him as a clerk—his skill in drawing plans, and in taking rapid surveys of the countries through which they passed, was extremely useful to his general; and his integrity made it safe to trust him as a secretary. His commanding officer, though a brave man, was illiterate, and a secretary was to him a necessary of life. Basile was not only useful, but agreeable; without any mean arts or servile adulation, he pleased, by simply showing the desire to please, and the ability to serve.

"Diable!" exclaimed the general one day, as he looked at Basile's plan of a town, which the army was besieging, "How comes it, that you are able to do all these things? But you have a genius for this sort of work, apparently."

"No, Sir," said Basile, "these things were taught to me, when I was a child, by a good friend."

"A good friend he was indeed! he did more for you, than if he had given you a fortune; for, in these times, that might have been soon taken from you; but now you have the means of making a fortune for yourself."

This observation of the general's, obvious as it may seem, is deserving of the serious consideration of those, who have children of their own to educate, or who have the disposal of money for public charities. In these times, no sensible person will venture to pronounce, that a change of fortune and station may not await the highest and the lowest; whether we rise or fall in the scale of society, personal qualities and knowledge will be valuable. Those who fall, cannot be destitute; and those who rise cannot be ridiculous or contemptible, if they have been prepared for their fortune by proper education. In shipwreck, those who

carry their all in their minds, are the most secure.

But to return to Basile.—He had sense enough not to make his general jealous of him by any unseasonable display of his talents, or any officious intrusion of advice, even upon subjects which he best understood.

The talents of the warrior and the secretary were in such different lines, that there was no danger of competition; and the general finding in his secretary the soul of all the arts, good sense, gradually acquired the habit of asking his opinion on every subject, that came within his department. It happened, that the general received orders from the directory, at Paris, to take a certain town, let it cost what it would, within a given time: in his perplexity, he exclaimed before Basile against the unreasonableness of these orders, and declared his belief, that it was impossible he should succeed, and that this was only a scheme of his enemies to prepare his ruin. Ba-

sile had attended to the operations of the engineer who acted under the general, and perfectly recollected the model of the mines of this town, which he had seen, when he was employed as draughtsman by his Parisian friend. Basile remembered, that there was formerly an old mine, that had been stopped up somewhere near the place, where the engineer was at work; he mentioned *in private* his suspicions to the general, who gave orders in consequence: the old mine was discovered, cleared out, and by these means the town was taken the day before the time appointed. Basile did not arrogate to himself any of the glory of this success—he kept his general's secret and his confidence. Upon their return to Paris, after a fortunate campaign, the general was more grateful than some others have been, perhaps because more room was given by Basile's prudence for the exercise of this virtue.

"My friend," said he to Basile, "you have done me a great service by your

counsel, and a greater still by holding your tongue. Speak now, and tell me freely, if there is any thing I can do for you. You see, as a victorious general, I have the upper hand amongst these fellows—Tracassier's scheme to ruin me missed—whatever I ask will at this moment be granted; speak freely, therefore."

Basile asked what he knew Victoire most desired—that M. and Madame de Fleury should be struck from the list of emigrants, and that their property now in the hands of the nation should be restored to them. The general promised, that this should be done. A warm contest ensued upon the subject between him and Tracassier; but the general stood firm; and Traccassier, enraged, forgot his usual cunning, and quarrelled irrevocably with a party, now more powerful than his own. The consequence was, that he and his adherents were driven from that station, in which they had so long tyrannised. From being the rulers of France, they

in a few hours became banished men, or, in the phrase of the times, *des déportés.*

We must not omit to mention the wretched end of Manon. The man with whom she lived perished by the guillotine. From his splendid house she went upon the stage—did not succeed—sunk from one degree of profligacy to another; and at last died in an hospital.

In the mean time, the order for the restoration of the Fleury property, and for permission for the Fleury family to return to France, was made out in due form, and Maurice begged to be the messenger of these good tidings: he set out for England with the order.

Victoire immediately went down to the Château de Fleury, to get every thing in readiness for the reception of the family.

Exiles are expeditious in their return to their native country. Victoire had but just time to complete her preparations, when M. and Madame de Fleury

arrived at Calais. Victoire had assembled all her companions, all Madame de Fleury's former pupils; and the hour when she was expected home, they with the peasants of the neighbourhood were all in their holiday clothes, and according to the custom of the country singing and dancing. Without music and dancing, there is no perfect joy in France. Never was *fête du village* or *fête de Seigneur* more joyful than this.

The old steward opened the gate—the carriage drove in. Madame de Fleury saw that home, which she had little expected ever more to behold; but all other thoughts were lost in the pleasure of meeting her beloved pupils.

"My children!" cried she, as they crowded round her the moment she got out of her carriage—"My dear *good* children!"

It was all she could say.—She leaned on Victoire's arm as she went into the house, and by degrees recovering from the almost painful excess of pleasure,

began to enjoy what she yet only confusedly felt.

Several of her pupils were so much grown and altered in their external appearance, that she could scarcely recollect them till they spoke, and when their voices and the expression of their countenances brought their childhood fully to her memory. Victoire, she thought, was changed the least, and at this she rejoiced.

The feeling and intelligent reader will imagine all the pleasure, that Madame de Fleury enjoyed this day; nor was it merely the pleasure of a day. She heard from all her friends, with prolonged satisfaction, repeated accounts of the good conduct of these young people during her absence. She learned with delight how her restoration to her country, and her fortune, had been effected; and is it necessary to add, that Victoire consented to marry Basile, and that she was suitably portioned, and what is better still, that she was perfectly happy?—M.

de Fleury rewarded the attachment and good conduct of Maurice, by taking him into his service; and making him his manager under the old steward at the Château de Fleury.

On Victoire's wedding day, Madame de Fleury produced all the little offerings of gratitude, which she had received from her and her companions during her exile. It was now her turn to confer favours, and she knew how to confer them both with grace and judgement.

"No gratitude in human nature! No gratitude in the lower classes of the people!" cried she: "How much those are mistaken who think so! I wish they could know my history and the history of these *my children*, and they would acknowledge their errour."

Edgeworthstown.
1805.

THE DUN.

THE DUN.

" Horrible monster! hated by gods and men."

PHILIPS.

" IN the higher and middle classes of society," says a celebrated writer, " it is a melancholy and distressing sight to observe, not unfrequently, a man of a noble and ingenuous disposition, once feelingly alive to a sense of honour and integrity, gradually sinking under the pressure of his circumstances, making his excuses at first with a blush of conscious shame, afraid to see the faces of his friends from whom he may have borrowed money, reduced to the meanest tricks and subterfuges to delay or avoid the payment of his just debts, till, ultimately grown familiar with falsehood, and at enmity with the world, he loses all the grace and dignity of man."

Colonel Pembroke, the subject of the following story, had not, at the time his biographer first became acquainted with him, "grown familiar with falsehood," his conscience was not entirely callous to reproach, nor was his heart insensible to compassion, but he was in a fair way to get rid of all troublesome feelings and principles. He was connected with a set of selfish young men of fashion, whose opinions stood him in stead of law, equity, and morality; to them he appealed in all doubtful cases, and his self-complacency being daily and hourly dependent upon their decisions, he had seldom either leisure or inclination to consult his own judgement. His amusements and his expenses were consequently regulated by the example of his companions, not by his own choice. To follow them in every absurd variety of the mode, either in dress or equipage, was his first ambition; and all their factitious wants appeared to him objects of the first necessity. No matter how good the boots, the hat, the

coat, the furniture, or the equipage might be, if they had outlived the fashion of the day, or even of the hour; they were absolutely worthless in his eyes. *Nobody* could be seen in such things—then of what use could they be to *any body?* Colonel Pembroke's finances were not exactly equal to the support of such *liberal* principles, but this was a misfortune, which he had in common with several of his companions. It was no check to their spirit—they could live upon credit—credit, "that talisman, which realises every thing it imagines, and which can imagine every thing*." Without staying to reflect upon the immediate or remote consequences of this system, Pembroke in his first attempts found it easy to reduce it to practice: but as he proceeded, he experienced some difficulties. Tradesmen's bills accumulated, and applications for payment became every day more frequent and pressing. He defended himself with much

* See Des Casaux, Sur le Mécanisme de Société.

address and ingenuity, and practice perfected him in all the Fabian arts of delay. "*No faith with duns*," became, as he frankly declared, a maxim of his morality. He could now, with the most plausible face, protest to a *poor devil*, upon the honour of a gentleman, that he should be paid to-morrow; when nothing was further from his intentions or his power, than to keep his word. And when *to-morrow* came, he could with the most easy assurance *damn the rascal* for putting a gentleman in mind of his promises. But there were persons more difficult to manage than *poor devils*. Colonel Pembroke's tailor, who had begun by being the most accommodating fellow in the world, and who had in three years run him up a bill of thirteen hundred pounds, at length began to fail in complaisance, and had the impertinence to talk of his large family, and his urgent calls for money, &c. And next the colonel's shoe and boot maker, a man from whom he had been in the habit of taking two hun-

dred pounds worth of shoes and boots every year, for himself and his servants, now pretended to be in distress for ready money, and refused to furnish more goods upon credit. "Ungrateful dog!" Pembroke called him; and he actually believed his creditors to be ungrateful and insolent, when they asked for their money; for men frequently learn to believe what they are in the daily habit of asserting*, especially if their assertions be not contradicted by their audience. He knew that his tradesmen overcharged him in every article he bought, and therefore he thought it but just to delay payment whilst it suited his convenience. "Confound them, they can very well afford to wait." As to their pleas of urgent demands for ready money—large families, &c., he considered these merely as words of course, tradesmen's cant, which should make no more impression upon a gentleman, than the whining of a beggar.

* Rochefoucault.

One day when Pembroke was just going out to ride with some of his gay companions, he was stopped at his own door by a pale, thin, miserable-looking boy, of eight or nine years old, who presented him with a paper, which he took for granted was a petition; he threw the child half a crown.—" There, take that," said he, " and stand out of the way of my horse's heels, I advise you, my little fellow."

The boy, however, still pressed closer; and without picking up the half-crown, held the paper to Colonel Pembroke, who had now vaulted into his saddle.

" O no! no! That's too much, my lad —I never read petitions—I'd sooner give half a crown at any time than read a petition."

" But, Sir, this is not a petition .... indeed, Sir, I am not a beggar."

" What is it then?—Heyday! a bill! —Then you're worse than a beggar—a dun!—a dun! in the public streets, at your time of life! You little rascal, why

what will you come to, before you are your father's age?"—The boy sighed—"If," pursued the colonel, "I were to serve you right, I should give you a good horse whipping.—Do you see this whip?"

"I do, sir," said the boy; "but——"

"But what? you insolent little dun!—But what?"

"My father is dying," said the child, bursting into tears, "and we have no money to buy him bread, or any thing."

Struck by these words, Pembroke snatched the paper from the boy, and looking hastily at the total and title of the bill, read—"Twelve pounds, fourteen—John White, Weaver."—"I know of no such person!—I have no dealings with weavers, child," said the colonel laughing—"My name's Pembroke—Colonel Pembroke."

"Colonel Pembroke—yes, sir, the very person Mr. Close, the tailor, sent me to!"

"Close the tailor! d—n the rascal

was it he sent you to dun me?—for this trick he shall not see a farthing of my money this twelvemonth. You may tell him so, you little whining hypocrite!—And hark you! the next time you come to me, take care to come with a better story—let your father and mother and six brothers and sisters be all lying ill of the fever—do you understand?"

He tore the bill into bits as he spoke, and showered it over the boy's head; Pembroke's companions laughed at this operation, and he facetiously called it "powdering a dun." They rode off to the Park in high spirits, and the poor boy picked up the half-crown, and returned home. His home was in a lane in Moorfields, about three miles distant from this gay part of the town. As the child had not eaten any thing that morning, he was feeble, and grew faint, as he was crossing Covent Garden. He sat down upon the corner of a stage of flowers.

"What are you doing there?" cried a

surly man, pulling him up by the arm; "What business have you lounging and loitering here, breaking my best balsam?"

"I did not mean to do any harm—I am not loitering, indeed, sir—I'm only weak," said the boy, "and hungry."

"Oranges! Oranges! fine china oranges!" cried a woman, rolling her barrow full of fine fruit towards him. "If you've a two pence in the world, you can't do better than take one of these fine ripe china oranges."

"I have not two pence of my own in the world," said the boy.

"What's that I see through the hole in your waistcoat pocket," said the woman; "is not that silver?"

"Yes, half a crown; which I am carrying home to my father, who is ill, and wants it more than I do."

"Pooh! take an orange out of it—it's only two pence—and it will do you good —I'm sure you look as if you wanted it badly enough."

"That may be—but father wants it worse—no, I won't change my half crown," said the boy, turning away from the tempting oranges.

The gruff gardener caught him by the hand.

"Here, I've moved the balsam a bit, and it is not broke I see; sit ye down, child, and rest yourself, and eat this," said he, putting into his hand half a ripe orange, which he had just cut.

"Thank you!—God bless you, sir!—How good it is—but," said the child, stopping after he had tasted the sweet juice, "I am sorry I have sucked so much, I might have carried it home to father who is ill, and what a treat it would be to him!—I'll keep the rest."

"No—that you sha'n't, said the orange woman. "But I'll tell you what you shall do—take this home to your father, which is a better one by half—I'm sure it will do him good — I never knew a ripe china orange do harm to man, woman, or child."

The boy thanked the good woman, and the gardener, as only those can thank, who have felt what it is to be in absolute want. When he was rested, and able to walk, he pursued his way home. His mother was watching for him at the street door.

"Well John, my dear, what news? Has he paid us?"

The boy shook his head.

"Then we must bear it as well as we can," said his mother, wiping the cold dew from her forehead.

"But look, mother, I have this half-crown, which the gentleman, thinking me a beggar, threw to me."

"Run with it, love, to the baker's.—No—stay, you're tired—I'll go myself, and do you step up to your father, and tell him the bread is coming in a minute."

"Don't run, for you're not able, mother; don't hurry so," said the boy, calling after her, and holding up his orange;

"See, I have this for father whilst you are away."

He clambered up three flights of dark, narrow, broken stairs, to the room in which his father lay. The door hung by a single hinge, and the child had scarcely strength enough to raise it out of the hollow in the decayed floor into which it had sunk. He pushed it open with as little noise as possible, just far enough to creep in.

Let those forbear to follow him, whose fine feelings can be moved only by romantic elegant scenes of distress, whose delicate sensibility shrinks from the revolting sight of real misery. Here are no pictures for romance, no stage effect to be seen, no poetic language to be heard—nothing to charm the imagination—every thing to disgust the senses.

This room was so dark, that upon first going into it, after having been in broad day-light, you could scarcely distinguish any one object it contained—and no one,

used to breathe a pure atmosphere, could probably have endured to remain many minutes in this garret. There were three beds in it—one on which the sick man lay; divided from it by a tattered rug, was another for his wife and daughter, and a third for his little boy in the furthest corner. Underneath the window was fixed a loom, at which the poor weaver had worked hard many a day and year—too hard, indeed—even till the very hour he was taken ill. His shuttle now lay idle upon the frame. A girl of about sixteen—his daughter—was sitting at the foot of his bed, finishing some plain work.

"O Anne! how your face is all flushed!" said her little brother, as she looked up when he came into the room.

"Have you brought us any money?" whispered she: "don't say *no* loud, for fear father should hear you."

The boy told her in a low voice all that had passed.

"Speak out, my dear, I'm not asleep;"

said his father. "So you are come back as you went."

"No father, not quite . . . . there's bread coming for you."

"Give me some more water, Anne, for my mouth is quite parched."

The little boy cut his orange in an instant, and gave a piece of it to his father, telling him at the same time how he came by it. The sick man raised his hands to Heaven, and blessed the poor woman who gave it to him.

"O how I love her! and how I hate that cruel, unjust, rich man, who won't pay father for all the hard work he has done for him!" cried the child; "How I hate him!"

"God forgive him!" said the weaver. "I don't know what will become of you all, when I'm gone; and no one to befriend you—or even to work at the loom. —Anne, I think if I was up . . . .," said he, raising himself . . . . "I could still contrive to do a little good."

"Dear father, don't think of getting

up; the best you can do for us, is to lie still and take rest."

"Rest!—I can take no rest, Anne—Rest! there's none for me in this world—And whilst I'm in it, is not it my duty to work for my wife and children?—Reach me my clothes, and I'll get up."

It was vain to contend with him, when this notion seized him, that it was his duty to work till the last. All opposition fretted and made him worse, so that his daughter and his wife, even from affection, were forced to yield, and to let him go to the loom, when his trembling hands were scarcely able to throw the shuttle. He did not know how weak he was, till he tried to walk. As he stepped out of bed, his wife came in with a loaf of bread in her hand—at the unexpected sight he made an exclamation of joy; sprang forward to meet her, but fell upon the floor in a swoon, before he could put one bit of the bread which she broke for him into his mouth. Want of sustenance, the having been overworked,

and the constant anxiety which preyed upon his spirits, had reduced him to this deplorable state of weakness. When he recovered his senses, his wife showed him his little boy eating a large piece of bread—she also eat, and made Anne eat before him, to relieve his mind from that dread which had seized it—and not without some reason—that he should see his wife and children starve to death.

"You find, father, there's no danger for to day," said Anne, "and to morrow I shall be paid for my plain work, and then we shall do very well for a few days longer, and I dare say in that time Mr. Close the tailor will receive some money from some of the great many rich gentlemen, who owe him so much, and you know he promised, that as soon as ever he was able he would pay us."

With such hopes, and the remembrance of such promises, the poor man's spirits could not be much raised; he knew, alas! how little dependence was to be placed on them. As soon as he

had eaten, and felt his strength revive, he insisted upon going to the loom: his mind was bent upon finishing a pattern, for which he was to receive five guineas in ready money—he worked and worked, then lay down and rested himself, then worked again, and so on during the remainder of the day, and during several hours of the night he continued to throw the shuttle, whilst his little boy and his wife by turns wound spools for him.

He completed his work, and threw himself upon his bed quite exhausted, just as the neighbouring clock struck one.

At this hour Colonel Pembroke was in the midst of a gay and brilliant assembly at Mrs. York's, in a splendid saloon illuminated with wax lights in profusion, the floor crayoned with roses and myrtles, which the dancers' feet effaced; the walls hung with the most expensive hot-house flowers; in short, he was surrounded with Luxury in all its extra-

vagance. It is said, that the peaches alone at this entertainment amounted to six hundred guineas. They cost a guinea a piece; the price of one of them, which Colonel Pembroke threw away because it was not perfectly ripe, would have supported the weaver and his whole family for a week.

There are political advocates for luxury, who assert, perhaps justly, that the extravagance of individuals increases the wealth of nations. But even upon this system, those who by false hopes excite the industrious to exertion, without paying them their just wages, commit not only the most cruel private injustice, but the most important public injury. The permanence of industry in any state must be proportioned to the certainty of its reward.

Amongst the masks at Mrs. York's were three, who amused the company particularly; the festive mob followed them as they moved, and their bon-mots were applauded and repeated by all the

best, that is to say, the most fashionable male and female judges of wit. The three distinguished characters were a spendthrift, a bailiff, and a dun. The spendthrift was supported with great spirit and *truth* by Colonel Pembroke, and two of his companions were *great* and *correct* in the parts of the bailiff and the dun. The happy idea of appearing in these characters this night had been suggested by the circumstance, that happened in the morning. Colonel Pembroke gave himself great credit, he said, for thus "striking novelty even from difficulty;" and he rejoiced that the rascal of a weaver had sent his boy to dun him, and had thus furnished him with diversion for the evening as well as the morning. We are much concerned, that we cannot, for the advantage of posterity, record any of the innumerable *good things*, which undoubtedly were uttered by this trio. Even the newspapers of the day could speak only in general panegyric.

The probability however is, that the colonel deserved the praises, that were lavished upon his manner of supporting his character. No man was better acquainted than himself with all those anecdotes of men of fashion, which could illustrate the spendthrift system. At least fifty times he had repeated, and always with the same *glee*, the reply of a great character, to a creditor who, upon being asked when his *bond* debts were likely to be paid, answered, " On the day of judgement."

Probably the admiration, which this and similar sallies of wit have excited, must have produced a strong desire in the minds of many young men of spirit, to perform similar feats; and though the ruin of innumerable poor creditors may be the consequence, that will not surely be deemed by a certain class of reasoners worthy of a moment's regret, or even a moment's thought. Persons of tender consciences may perhaps be shocked at the idea of committing injustice and cru-

elty by starving their creditors, but they may strengthen their minds by taking an enlarged political view of the subject.

It is obvious, that whether a hundred guineas be in the pocket of A or B, the total sum of the wealth of the nation remains the same; and whether the enjoyments of A be as 100, and those of B as 0—or whether those enjoyments be equally divided between A and B—is a matter of no importance to the political arithmetician, because in both cases it is obvious, that the total sum of national happiness remains the same. The happiness of individuals is nothing compared with the general mass.

And if the individual B should fancy himself ill-used by our political arithmetician, and should take it into his head to observe, that though the happiness of B is nothing to the general mass, yet that it is every thing to him—the politician of course takes snuff, and replies, that his observation is foreign to the purpose —that the good of the whole society is

the object in view. And if B immediately accede to this position, and only ask humbly, whether the good of the whole be not made up of the good of the parts—and whether as a part he have not some right to his share of good—the dexterous logical arithmetician answers, that B is totally out of the question, because B is a negative quantity in the equation. And if obstinate B, still conceiving himself aggrieved, objects to this total annihilation of himself and his interests, and asks why the lot of extinction should not fall upon the debtor C, or even upon the calculator himself, by whatever letter of the alphabet he happens to be designed, the calculator must knit his brow, and answer—any thing he pleases—except, *I don't know*—for this is a phrase below the dignity of a philosopher. This argument is produced, not as a statement of what is really the case, but as a popular argument against political sophistry.

Colonel Pembroke, notwithstanding his

success at Mrs. York's masquerade in his character of a spendthrift, could not by his utmost wit and address satisfy or silence his impertinent tailor. Mr. Close absolutely refused to give further credit, without valuable consideration, and the colonel was compelled to pass his bond for the whole sum which was claimed, which was fifty pounds more than was strictly due, in order to compound with the tailor for the want of ready money. When the bond was fairly signed, sealed, and delivered, Mr. Close produced the poor weaver's bill.

"Colonel Pembroke," said he, "I have a trifling bill here—I am really ashamed to speak to you about such a trifle—but as we are settling all accounts—and as this White the weaver is so wretchedly poor, that he or some of his family are with me every day of my life dunning me to get me to speak about their little demand . . . . ."

"Who is this White?" said Mr. Pembroke.

"You recollect the elegant waistcoat pattern of which you afterwards bought up the whole piece, lest it should become common and vulgar?—this White was the weaver, from whom we got it."

"Bless me! why that's two years ago: I thought that fellow was paid long ago!"

"No, indeed, I wish he had! for he has been the torment of my life this many a month—I never saw people so eager about their money."

"But why do you employ such miserable, greedy creatures? What can you expect but to be dunned every hour of your life?"

"Very true, indeed, colonel; it is what I always, on that principle, avoid as far as possibly I can: but I can't blame myself in this particular instance; for this White, at the time I employed him first, was a very decent man, and in a very good way for one of his sort: but I suppose he has taken to drink, for he is worth not a farthing now."

"What business has a fellow of his sort to drink? he should leave that for his betters," said Colonel Pembroke, laughing. Drinking's too great a pleasure for a weaver. The drunken rascal's money is safer in my hands, tell him, than in his own."

The tailor's conscience twinged him a little at this instant, for he had spoken entirely at random, not having the slightest grounds for his insinuation, that this poor weaver had ruined himself by drunkenness.

"Upon my word, sir," said Close, retracting, "the man may not be a drunken fellow for any thing I know positively —I purely surmised *that* might be the case, from his having fallen into such distress, which is no otherwise accountable for, to my comprehension, except we believe his own story, that he has money due to him which he cannot get paid, and that this has been his ruin."

Colonel Pembroke cleared his throat two or three times upon hearing this last

suggestion, and actually took up the weaver's bill with some intention of paying it; but he recollected, that he should want the ready money he had in his pocket for another indispensable occasion; for he was *obliged* to go to Brookes's that night, so he contented his humanity by recommending it to Mr. Close to pay White and have done with him.

"If you will let him have the money, you know, you can put it down to my account, or make a memorandum of it at the back of the bond. In short, settle it as you will, but let me hear no more about it. I have not leisure to think of such trifles—Good morning to you, Mr. Close."

Mr. Close was far from having any intentions of complying with the colonel's request: when the weaver's wife called upon him after his return home, he assured her, that he had not seen the colour of one guinea, or of one farthing, of Colonel Pembroke's money, and that it was absolutely impossible that he could

pay Mr. White till he was paid himself —that it could not be expected he should advance money for any body out of his own pocket—that he begged he might not be pestered and dunned any more, for that *he really had not leisure to think of such trifles*.

For want of this trifle, of which neither the fashionable colonel, nor his fashionable tailor, had leisure to think, the poor weaver and his whole family were reduced to the last degree of human misery—to absolute famine. The man had exerted himself to the utmost to finish a pattern, which had been bespoken for a tradesman who promised upon the delivery of it to pay him five guineas in hand. This money he received; but four guineas of it were due to his landlord for rent of his wretched garret, and the remaining guinea was divided between the baker, to whom an old bill was due, and the apothecary, to whom they were obliged to have recourse, as the weaver was extremely ill,

They had literally nothing now to depend upon but what the wife and daughter could earn by needle-work; and they were known to be so miserably poor, that the *prudent* neighbours did not like to trust them with plain-work, lest it should not be returned safely. Besides, in such a dirty place as they lived in, how could it be expected, that they should put any work out of their hands decently clean. —The woman to whom the house belonged, however, at last procured them work from Mrs. Carver, a widow lady, who, she said, was extremely charitable. She advised Anne to carry home the work as soon as it was finished, and to wait to see the lady herself, who might perhaps be as charitable to her as she was to many others. Anne resolved to take this advice; but when she carried home her work to the place to which she was directed, her heart almost failed her; for she found Mrs. Carver lived in such a handsome house, that there was little chance of a poor girl being admitted by

the servants further than the hall door or the kitchen. The lady, however, happened to be just coming out of her parlour at the moment the hall door was opened for Anne; and she bid her come in, and show her work—approved of it—commended her industry—asked her several questions about her family—seemed to be touched with compassion by Anne's account of their distress—and after paying what she had charged for the work, put half a guinea into her hand, and bid her call the next day, when she hoped, that she should be able to do something more for her. This unexpected bounty, and the kindness of voice and look, with which it was accompanied, had such an effect upon the poor girl, that if she had not caught hold of a chair to support herself, she would have sunk to the ground. Mrs. Carver immediately made her sit down —"O Madam! I'm well, quite well now —it was nothing—only surprise," said she, bursting into tears. "I beg your

pardon for this foolishness—but it is only because I'm weaker to day than usual for want of eating."

"For want of eating! my poor child! how she trembles!—she is weak indeed —and must not leave my house in this condition."

Mrs. Carver rang the bell, and ordered a glass of wine; but Anne was afraid to drink it, as she was not used to wine, and as she knew that it would affect her head if she drank without eating. When the lady found that she refused the wine, she did not press it, but insisted upon her eating something.

"O Madam!" said the poor girl, "it is long, long indeed, since I have eaten so heartily; and it is almost a shame for me to stay eating such dainties, when my father and mother are all the while in the way they are. But I'll run home with the half-guinea, and tell them how good you have been, and they will be so joyful and so thankful to you! My mother will come herself, I'm sure, with

me to-morrow morning—She can thank you so much better than I can!"

Those only who have known the extreme of want, can imagine the joy and gratitude with which the half-guinea was received by this poor family.—Half a guinea!—Colonel Pembroke spent six half-guineas this very day in a fruit shop, and ten times that sum at a jeweller's on seals and baubles for which he had no manner of use.

When Anne and her mother called the next morning to thank their benefactress, she was not up; but her servant gave them a parcel from his mistress: it contained a fresh supply of needle-work, a gown, and some other clothes, which were directed *for Anne*. The servant said, that if she would call again about eight in the evening, his lady would probably be able to see her, and that she begged to have the work finished by that time. The work was finished, though with some difficulty, by the appointed hour, and Anne, dressed in her new

clothes, was at Mrs. Carver's door, just as the clock struck eight. The old lady was alone at tea; she seemed to be well pleased by Anne's punctuality; said that she had made inquiries respecting Mr. and Mrs. White, and that she heard an excellent character of them; that therefore she was disposed to do every thing she could to serve them. She added, that she "should soon part with her own maid, and that perhaps Anne might supply her place." Nothing could be more agreeable to the poor girl than this proposal; her father and mother were rejoiced at the idea of seeing her so well placed; and they now looked forward impatiently for the day when Mrs. Carver's maid was to be dismissed. In the mean time, the old lady continued to employ Anne, and to make her presents, sometimes of clothes, and sometimes of money. The money she always gave to her parents; and she loved her "good old lady," as she always called her, more for putting it in her power

thus to help her father and mother, than for all the rest. The weaver's disease had arisen from want of sufficient food, from fatigue of body, and anxiety of mind; and he grew rapidly better, now that he was relieved from want, and inspired with hope. Mrs. Carver bespoke from him two pieces of waistcoating, which she promised to dispose of for him most advantageously, by a raffle, for which she had raised subscriptions amongst her numerous acquaintance. She expressed great indignation, when Anne told her how Mr. White had been ruined by persons, who would not pay their just debts; and when she knew that the weaver was overcharged for all his working materials, because he took them up on credit, she generously offered to lend them whatever ready money might be necessary, which she said Anne might repay, at her leisure, out of her wages.

"O Madam!" said Anne, "you are too good to us, indeed! too good! and if you could but see into our hearts, you

would know, that we are not ungrateful."

"I am sure, *that* is what you never will be, my dear," said the old lady; "at least such is my opinion of you."

"Thank you, Ma'am! thank you, from the bottom of my heart! — We should all have been starved, if it had not been for you. And it is owing to you, that we are so happy now—quite different creatures from what we were."

"Quite a different creature, indeed, you look, child, from what you did the first day I saw you. To-morrow my own maid goes, and you may come at ten o'clock; and I hope we shall agree very well together—you'll find me an easy mistress, and I make no doubt I shall always find you the good grateful girl you seem to be."

Anne was impatient for the moment when she was to enter into the service of her benefactress; and she lay awake half the night, considering how she should ever be able to show sufficient gratitude. As Mrs. Carver had often ex-

pressed her desire to have Anne look neat and smart, she dressed herself as well as she possibly could; and when her poor father and mother took leave of her, they could not help observing, as Mrs. Carver had done the day before, that "Anne looked quite a different creature, from what she was a few weeks ago." She was, indeed, an extremely pretty girl; but we need not stop to relate all the fond, praises, that were bestowed upon her beauty by her partial parents. Her little brother John was not at home, when she was going away; he was at a carpenter's shop in the neighbourhood mending a wheelbarrow, which belonged to that good-natured orange woman, who gave him the orange for his father. Anne called at the carpenter's shop to take leave of her brother. The woman was there waiting for her barrow—she looked earnestly at Anne when she entered, and then whispered to the boy, "Is that your sister?"—"Yes," said the boy, "and as good a sister she is as ever was born."

"May be so," said the woman, "but she is not likely to be good for much long, in the way she is going on now."

"What way?—what do you mean?" said Anne, colouring violently.

"O you understand me well enough, though you look so innocent."

"I do not understand you in the least."

"No!—Why, is not it you, that I see going almost every day to that house in Chiswell-street?"

"Mrs. Carver's?—Yes."

"Mrs. Carver's, indeed!" cried the woman, throwing an orange-peel from her with an air of disdain—"a pretty come off indeed! as if I did not know her name, and all about her as well as you do."

"Do you?" said Anne, "then I am sure you know one of the best women in the world."

The woman looked still more earnestly than before in Anne's countenance; and then taking hold of both her hands exclaimed—

"You poor young creature! what are you about?—I do believe you don't know what you are about—if you do, you are the greatest cheat I ever looked in the face, long as I've lived in this cheating world."

"You frighten my sister," said the boy —"do pray tell her what you mean at once, for look how pale she turns."

"So much the better, for now I have good hope of her—Then to tell you all at once—no matter how I frighten her, it's for her good—this Mrs. Carver, as you call her, is only Mrs. Carver when she wants to pass upon such as you for a good woman."

"To *pass* for a good woman!" repeated Anne with indignation—"O she is, she is a good woman—you do not know her as I do."

"I know her a great deal better I tell you—if you choose not to believe me—go your ways—go to your ruin—go to your shame—go to your grave—as hundreds have gone, by the same road, be-

fore you.—Your Mrs. Carver keeps two houses, and one of them is a bad house—and that's the house you'll soon go to, if you trust to her—Now you know the whole truth."

The poor girl was shocked so much, that for several minutes she could neither speak nor think. As soon as she had recovered sufficient presence of mind to consider what she should do, she declared, "that she would that instant go home and put on her rags again, and return to the wicked Mrs. Carver all the clothes she had given her."

"But what will become of us all?—She has lent my father money—a great deal of money.—How can he pay her?—O, I will pay her all—I will go into some honest service, now I am well and strong enough to do any sort of hard work, and God knows I am willing."

Full of these resolutions, Anne hurried home, intending to tell her father and mother all that happened; but they were neither of them within. She flew to the

mistress of the house who had first recommended her to Mrs. Carver, and reproached her in the most moving terms, which the agony of her mind could suggest. Her landlady listened to her with astonishment, either real or admirably well affected—declared, that she knew nothing more of Mrs. Carver, but that she lived in a large fine house, and that she had been very charitable to some poor people in Moorfields—that she bore the best of characters, and that if nothing could be said against her but by an orange woman, there was no great reason to believe such scandal.

Anne now began to think, that the whole of what she had heard might be a falsehood, or a mistake; one moment she blamed herself for so easily suspecting a person who had shown her so much kindness; but the next minute the emphatic words and warning looks of the woman recurred to her mind; and though they were but the words and looks of an orange woman, she could not help

dreading, that there was some truth in them. The clock struck ten, whilst she was in this uncertainty. The woman of the house urged her to go without further delay to Mrs. Carver's, who would undoubtedly be displeased by any want of punctuality; but Anne wished to wait for the return of her father and mother.

"They will not be back, either of them, these three hours; for your mother is gone to the other end of the town about that old bill of Colonel Pembroke's, and your father is gone to buy some silk for weaving—he told me he should not be home before three o'clock."

Notwithstanding these remonstrances, Anne persisted in her resolution—she took off the clothes, which she had received from Mrs. Carver, and put on those which she had been used to wear. Her mother was much surprised, when she came in, to see her in this condition; and no words can describe her grief, when she heard the cause of this change. She blamed herself severely for not hav-

ing made inquiries concerning Mrs. Carver, before she had suffered her daughter to accept of any presents from her; and she wept bitterly, when she recollected the money which this woman had lent her husband.

"She will throw him into jail, I am sure she will—we shall be worse off a thousand times, than ever we were in our worst days. The work that is in the loom, by which he hoped to get so much, is all for her, and it will be left upon hands now; and how are we to pay the woman of this house for the lodgings?... O! I see it all coming upon us at once," continued the poor woman, wringing her hands. "If that Colonel Pembroke would but let us have our own!—But there I've been all the morning hunting him out; and at last, when I did see him, he only swore, and said we were all a family of *duns*, or some such nonsense. And then he called after me from the top of his fine stairs, just to say, that he had ordered Close the tailor to pay us; and

when I went to him, there was no satisfaction to be got from him—his shop was full of customers, and he hustled me away, giving me for answer, that when Colonel Pembroke paid him, he would pay us, and no sooner.—Ah! these purse-proud tradesfolk, and these sparks of fashion, what do they know of all we suffer?—What do they care for us?—It is not for charity I ask any of them—only for what my own husband has justly earned, and hardly toiled for too; and this I cannot get out of their hands.—If I could we might defy this wicked woman —but now we are laid under her feet, and she will trample us to death."

In the midst of these lamentations, Anne's father came in: when he learnt the cause of them, he stood for a moment in silence; then snatched from his daughter's hand the bundle of clothes, which she had prepared to return to Mrs. Carver.

"Give them to me; I will go to this woman myself," cried he with indigna-

tion. "Anne shall never more set her foot within those doors."

"Dear father," cried Anne, stopping him as he went out of the door, "perhaps it is all a mistake, do pray inquire from somebody else before you speak to Mrs. Carver—she looks so good, she has been so kind to me, I cannot believe that she is wicked. Do pray inquire of a great many people before you knock at the door."

He promised, that he would do all his daughter desired.

With most impatient anxiety, they waited for his return: the time of his absence appeared insupportably long, and they formed new fears and new conjectures every instant. Every time they heard a footstep upon the stairs, they ran out to see who it was: sometimes it was the landlady—sometimes the lodgers or their visitors—at last came the person they longed to see; but the moment they beheld him, all their fears were confirmed. He was pale as death, and his lips trem-

bled with convulsive motion. He walked directly up to his loom, and without speaking one syllable began to cut the unfinished work out of it.

"What are you about, my dear?" cried his wife. "Consider what you are about—this work of yours is the only dependence we have in the world."

"You have nothing in this world to depend upon, I tell you," cried he, continuing to cut out the web with a hurried hand—"you must not depend on me—you must not depend on my work—I shall never throw this shuttle more whilst I live—think of me as if I was dead—to morrow I shall be dead to you—I shall be in a jail, and there must lie till carried out in my coffin.—Here take this work just as it is to our landlady—she met me on the stairs, and said she must have her rent directly—that will pay her—I'll pay all I can.—As for the loom, that's only hired—the silk I bought to day will pay the hire—I'll pay all my debts to the uttermost farthing, as far as I am able—but

the ten guineas to that wicked woman I cannot pay—so I must rot in a jail—Don't cry, Anne, don't cry so, my good girl—you'll break my heart, wife, if you take on so. Why! have not we one comfort, that let us go out of this world when we may, or how we may, we shall go out of it honest, having no one's ruin to answer for, having done our duty to man and God, as far as we were able? —My child," continued he, catching Anne in his arms, "I have you safe, and I thank God for it."

When this poor man had thus in an incoherent manner given vent to his first feelings, he became somewhat more composed, and was able to relate all that had passed between him and Mrs. Carver. The inquiries which he made before he saw her sufficiently confirmed the orange woman's story; and when he returned the presents, which Anne had unfortunately received, Mrs. Carver, with all the audacity of a woman hardened in guilt, avowed her purpose and her profession

— declared, that whatever ignorance, and innocence, Anne or her parents might now find it convenient to affect, she "was confident, they had all the time perfectly understood what she was about, and that she would not be cheated at last by a parcel of swindling hypocrites." With horrid imprecations she then swore, that if Anne was kept from her, she would have vengeance—and that her vengeance should have no bounds. The event showed, that these were not empty threats—the very next day she sent two bailiffs to arrest Anne's father. They met him in the street, as he was going to pay the last farthing he had to the baker. The wretched man in vain endeavoured to move the ear of justice, by relating the simple truth. Mrs. Carver was rich—her victim was poor. He was committed to jail; and he entered his prison with the firm belief, that there he must drag out the remainder of his days.

One faint hope remained in his wife's heart—she imagined, that if she could but

prevail upon Colonel Pembroke's servants, either to obtain for her sight of their master, or if they would carry to him a letter containing an exact account of her distress, he would immediately pay the fourteen pounds, which had been so long due. With this money she could obtain her husband's liberty, and she fancied all might yet be well. Her son, who could write a very legible hand, wrote the petition.—"Ah, mother!" said he, "don't hope that Colonel Pembroke will read it—he will tear it to pieces, as he did one that I carried him before."

"I can but try," said she; "I cannot believe that any gentleman is so cruel, and so unjust—he must and will pay us when he knows the whole truth."

Colonel Pembroke was dressing in a hurry, to go to a great dinner at the Crown and Anchor tavern. One of Pembroke's gay companions had called, and was in the room waiting for him. It was at this inauspicious time, that Mrs. White arrived. Her petition the servant at first

absolutely refused to take from her hands; but at last a young lad, whom the colonel had lately brought from the country, and who had either more natural feeling, or less acquired power of equivocating than his fellows, consented to carry up the petition, when he should, as he expected, be called by his master to report the state of a favourite horse that was sick. While his master's hair was dressing, the lad was summoned; and when the health of the horse had been anxiously inquired into, the lad with country awkwardness scratched his head, and laid the petition before his master, saying—"Sir, there's a poor woman below waiting for an answer; and if so be what she says is true, as I take it to be, 'tis enough to break one's heart."

"Your heart, my lad, is not seasoned to London yet, I perceive," said Colonel Pembroke smiling; "why your heart will be broke a thousand times over by every beggar you meet."

"No, no: I be too much of a man for

that," replied the groom, wiping his eyes hastily with the back of his hand—"not such a noodle as that comes to neither—beggars are beggars, and so to be treated—but this woman, sir, is no common beggar—not she; nor is she begging any ways—only to be paid her bill—so I brought it, as I was coming up."

"Then, sir, as you are going down, you may take it down again, if you please," cried Colonel Pembroke, "and in future, sir, I recommend it to you, to look after your horses, and to trust me to look after my own affairs."

The groom retreated, and his master gave the poor woman's petition, without reading it, to the hair-dresser, who was looking for a piece of paper to try the heat of his irons.

"I should be pestered with bills and petitions from morning till night, if I did not frighten these fellows out of the trick of bringing them to me," continued Colonel Pembroke, turning to his companion. "That blockhead of a groom is but just

come to town; he does not know yet how to drive away a dun—but he'll learn. They say, that the American dogs did not know how to bark, till they learnt it from their civilised betters."

Colonel Pembroke habitually drove away reflection, and silenced the whispers of conscience, by noisy declamation, or sallies of wit.

At the bottom of the singed paper, which the hair-dresser left on the table, the name of White was sufficiently visible. "White!" exclaimed Mr. Pembroke, "as I hope to live and breathe, these Whites have been this half-year the torment of my life." He started up, rang the bell, and gave immediate orders to his servant, that *these Whites* should never more be let in, and that no more of their bills and petitions in any form whatever should be brought to him I'll punish them for their insolence—I won't pay them one farthing this twelvemonth, and if the woman is not gone, pray tell her so—I bid Close the tailor pay them:

if he has not, it is no fault of mine. Let me not hear a syllable more about it—I'll part with the first of you who dares to disobey me."

"The woman is gone, I believe, sir," said the footman; "it was not I let her in, and I refused to bring up the letter."

"You did right. Let me hear no more about the matter. We shall be late at the Crown and Anchor. I beg your pardon, my dear friend, for detaining you so long."

Whilst the colonel went to his jovial meeting, where he was the life and spirit of the company, the poor woman returned in despair to the prison where her husband was confined.

We forbear to describe the horrible situation to which this family were soon reduced. Beyond a certain point the human heart cannot feel compassion.

One day, as Anne was returning from the prison, where she had been with her father, she was met by a porter, who put a letter into her hands, then turned down

a narrow lane, and was out of sight before she could inquire from whom he came. When she read the letter, however, she could not be in doubt—it came from Mrs. Carver, and contained these words:

"You can gain nothing by your present obstinacy—you are the cause of your father's lying in jail, and of your mother's being, as she is, nearly starved to death. You could relieve them from misery worse than death, and place them in ease and comfort for the remainder of their days. Be assured, they do not speak sincerely to you, when they pretend not to wish that your compliance should put an end to their present sufferings. It is you that are cruel to them—it is you that are cruel to yourself, and can blame nobody else. You might live all your days in a house as good as mine, and have a plentiful table served from one year's end to another with all the dainties of the season, and you might be dressed as ele-

gant as the most elegant lady in London (which by the bye your beauty deserves), and you would have servants of your own, and a carriage of your own, and nothing to do all day long but take your pleasure. And after all, what is asked of you?—only to make a person happy, that half the town would envy you, that would make it a study to gratify you in every wish of your heart. The person alluded to you have seen, and more than once, when you have been talking to me of work in my parlour. He is a very rich and generous gentleman. If you come to Chiswell-street about six this evening you will find all I say true—if not, you and yours must take the consequences."

Coarse as the eloquence of this letter may appear, Anne could not read it without emotion: it raised in her heart a violent contest. Virtue, with poverty and famine, were on one side—and vice, with

affluence, love, and every worldly pleasure, on the other.

Those, who have been bred up in the lap of luxury, whom the breath of heaven has never visited too roughly; whose minds from their earliest infancy have been guarded even with more care than their persons; who in the dangerous season of youth are surrounded by all that the solicitude of experienced friends, and all that polished society can devise for their security; are not perhaps competent to judge of the temptations by which beauty in the lower classes of life may be assailed. They who have never seen a father in prison, or a mother perishing for want of the absolute necessaries of life—they who have never themselves known the cravings of famine, cannot form an adequate idea of this poor girl's feelings, and of the temptation to which she was now exposed. She wept—she hesitated — and "the woman that deliberates is lost." Perhaps those, who

are the most truly virtuous of her sex, will be the most disposed to feel for this poor creature, who was literally half-famished before her good resolutions were conquered. At last she yielded to necessity. At the appointed hour, she was in Mrs. Carver's house. This woman received her with triumph—she supplied Anne immediately with food, and then hastened to deck out her victim in the most attractive manner. The girl was quite passive in her hands. She promised, though scarcely knowing that she uttered the words, to obey the instructions that were given to her, and she suffered herself without struggle, or apparent emotion, to be led to destruction. She appeared quite insensible—but at last she was roused from this state of stupefaction, by the voice of a person with whom she found herself alone. The stranger, who was a young and gay gentleman, pleasing both in his person and manners, attempted by every possi-

ble means to render himself agreeable to her, to raise her spirits, and calm her apprehension. By degrees, his manner changed from levity to tenderness. He represented to her, that he was not a brutal wretch, who could be gratified by any triumph in which the affections of the heart have no share, and he assured her, that in any connexion which she might be prevailed upon to form with him, she should be treated with honour and delicacy.

Touched by his manner of speaking, and overpowered by the sense of her own situation, Anne could not reply one single word to all he said—but burst into an agony of tears, and sinking on her knees before him, exclaimed—

"Save me! save me from myself!—Restore me to my parents, before they have reason to hate me."

The gentleman seemed to be somewhat in doubt, whether this was *acting*, or nature; but he raised Anne from the

ground, and placed her upon a seat beside him.—"Am I to understand, then, that I have been deceived, and that our present meeting is against your own consent?"

"No, I cannot say that—O how I wish that I could——I did wrong—very wrong, to come here—but I repent—I was half-starved—I have a father in jail—I thought I could set him free with the money——but I will not pretend to be better than I am—I believe I thought, that, beside relieving my father, I should live all my days without ever more knowing what distress is—and I thought I should be happy—but now I have changed my mind—I never could be happy with a bad conscience—I know—by what I have felt this last hour."

Her voice failed; and she sobbed for some moments without being able to speak. The gentleman, who now was convinced, that she was quite artless and thoroughly in earnest, was struck with

compassion; but his compassion was not unmixed with other feelings, and he had hopes, that, by treating her with tenderness, he should in time make it her wish to live with him as his mistress. He was anxious to hear what her former way of life had been, and she related, at his request, the circumstances by which she and her parents had been reduced to such distress. His countenance presently showed how much he was interested in her story—he grew red and pale—he started from his seat, and walked up and down the room in great agitation, till at last, when she mentioned the name of Colonel Pembroke, he stopped short, and exclaimed—

"I am the man—I am Colonel Pembroke—I am that unjust, unfeeling wretch!—How often, in the bitterness of your hearts, you must have cursed me!"

"O no—my father—when he was at the worst, never cursed you; and I am sure he will have reason to bless you

now, if you send his daughter back again to him, such as she was when she left him."

"That shall be done," said Colonel Pembroke; "and in doing so, I make some sacrifice, and have some merit. It is time I should make some reparation for the evils I have occasioned," continued he, taking a handful of guineas from his pocket: "but first let me pay my just debts."

"My poor father!" exclaimed Anne, —"To morrow he will be out of prison."

"I will go with you to the prison, where your father is confined—I will force myself to behold all the evils I have occasioned."

Colonel Pembroke went to the prison; and he was so much struck by the scene, that he not only relieved the misery of this family, but in two months afterwards his debts were paid, his race horses sold, and all his expenses regulated, so as to render him ever afterwards truly

independent. He no longer spent his days, like many young men of fashion, either in DREADING or in DAMNING DUNS.

Edgeworthstown,
1802.

END OF VOL. II.

Printed by S. Hamilton, Weybridge.